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AMIGA POWER

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SIDE A BOMBUZAL

SIDE B KID GLOVES

QUICK! HURRY OVER TO PAGE 5 FOR FULL DETAILS! →

BEAST BUSTERS

Playable level specially prepared for AMIGA POWER by Activision

THE EXECUTIONER

New label Hawk break cover with this exclusive preview

PLUS! THREE GREAT PD GAMES

PHARAOH'S CURSE • Vintage platform game fun
MAZEMAN • Sounds familiar? Damn right it does!
DAD • Brilliantly simple block-sliding brain teaser

Can't see your disk or poster stuck here? Then go and tell your newsagent immediately!

THE ULTIMATE AUTUMN PREVIEW

It's The Simpsons versus Sim Earth...

The Godfather against Captain Planet...

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We reveal all the **GREAT GAMES** to come and rate their chances

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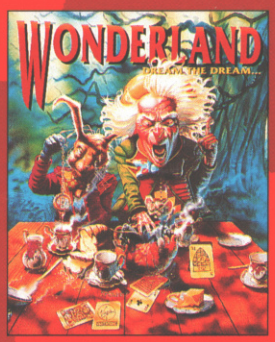

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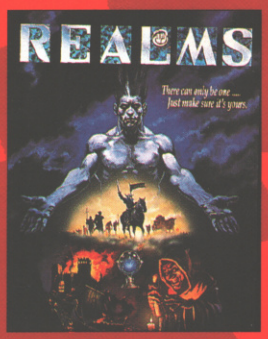

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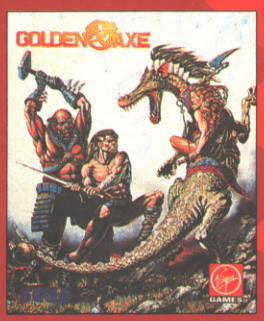

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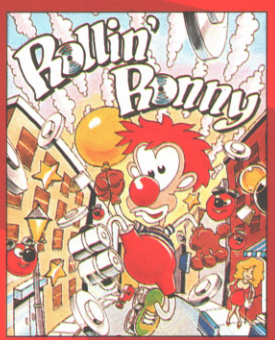

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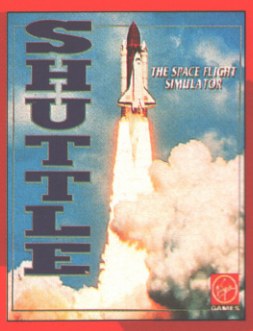

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Virgin GAMES

THIS IS AMIGA POWER

AMIGA POWER
ISSUE FOUR AUG 1991

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Thanks this issue to: Cliff Ramshaw for work on the cover disk, Maff Evans for helping Mark out with *Monkey Island*, Eric Matthews for the *Gods* tips, Katrina Windows for having such a great name and, erm, that's about it.

COMPETITION WINNER: Pathetic attempts to think of a name for (now ex-) Art Editor Trevor's new kitten have been, erm, trickling in – we haven't had any he thinks he could possibly use yet, and (to be honest) don't hold much hope for a last minute surge of decent ones either. Best so far has been the rather useless 'Katie'. Sorry, no prize. Things are looking slightly better in the 'people you fancy' compo – at last a few decent wall-mountable entries came in, the best being a giant picture of Twin Peak's star Sherilyn Fenn sent in by a Malcolm Frazer of Moray in Scotland. Thanks Malcolm!
THIS MONTH'S COMPO: To tie in with our film licence feature, pick us a film nobody's made a game of yet, suggest what sort of game it could be, and give us a brief synopsis. The best/funniest entry gets a free software prize.

AMIGA POWER comes to you from Future Publishing, the stupidly successful publishers of Britain's biggest (and best!) 'leisure' computing magazines. There's Amiga Format, Amiga Shopper, ST Format, Your Sinclair, Commodore Format, Amstrad Action, New Computer Express, Sega Power, PC Plus, PC Answer and 8000 Plus on the computing side, Classic CD, Needlecraft and Mountain Biking UK on the, erm, non-computer side, and new ones to be announced any day now. (Hurrah!)

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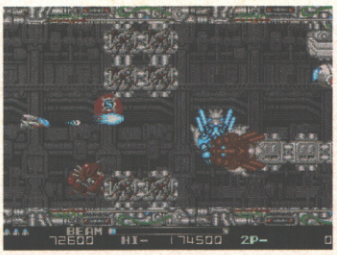
10 TRUE STORIES
Whatever happened to the Amiga cartridge? What the devil are The Blues Brothers doing in this magazine? And what on earth are the Bitmaps doing next? All the Amiga games news worth reading – plus Crib Sheets, Oh Dear..., Rock Hard Quiz, Essential Games and – yes! – the chance to win your own mini TV!

16 THE CHARTS
What's going up, what's coming down, and what's hanging about in the middle somewhere – that Gallup Chart rundown in full.

37 COMPLETE CONTROL
11(!) pages of hints and tips, make Complete Control the biggest Amiga tips section of all! This month: massive *Gods* maps, a giant *Prince Of Persia* guide, finding your way around *Monkey Island* and more!

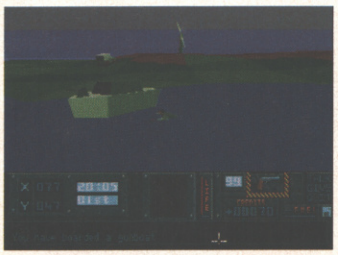
62 IF WE'D KNOWN THEN...
The Assembly Line have been responsible for some of the strangest – and most original – Amiga games ever written. But what do they think of their old games now?

GAMES OF THE MO

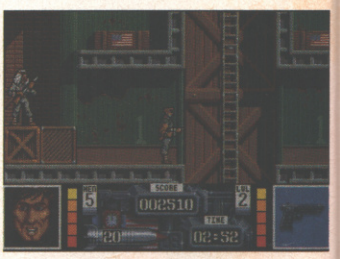


R-TYPE II
Good coin-op, great conversion. Activision show the way. Page 20

JIMMY WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SNOOKER
Cue for a snooker pun... Page 24



HUNTER
Activision's solid 3D multi-vehicle runaround finally gets the release it deserves... Page 28



NAVY SEALS
If we were to rate Ocean's film licence, it would be well below 'C' level... Page 34

THE ULTIMATE AUTUMN GAME GUIDE

Here's the cure to the summertime blues – 11 pages of special previews of this Autumn's biggest games. It's *The Simpsons* versus *The Godfather*, Hulk Hogan versus *Robin Hood*, and it all starts on page 49.

90 SUBSCRIBE!
Get your copy of AMIGA POWER delivered straight to your door (and get to chose between *Exile*, *Switchblade II* and *Armour Geddon* FREE!!) Plus! Special offers! Those elusive back issues! AMIGA POWER binders! And more!

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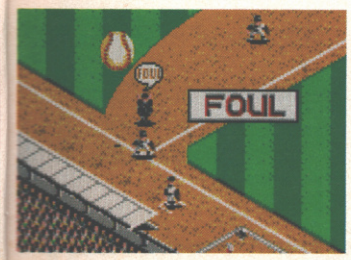
MONTH



RBI TWO BASEBALL
Sports sims are back! We join Domark at the plate... Page 26

LEARN TO FLY!
(Just don't blame us if you crash!)
Page 89

66 ZEN AND THE ART OF FILM CONVERSIONS
Just how do you go about converting a hit movie licence to the Amiga anyway? AMIGA POWER investigates...

95 THE BOTTOM LINE
Almost 300 of last year's top games rated to bring you a complete buyer's guide to what's worth splashing out for, what's worth considering, and what you should avoid like the plague.

103 DO THE WRITE THING
ELSPA explain all, you make your feeling felt, and the plot thickens as we ask the question: 'Who killed Gary Penn?'

106 SECOND OPINION
Yes another irregular back page series kicks into gear, this one allowing top industry 'professionals' the chance to make their *real* feelings felt on recent games. This month, Neil Young of Probe Software.

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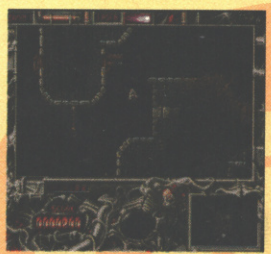
disk FOUR

Welcome to our fourth AMIGA POWER Cover Disk, crammed with as varied a selection of games as you're ever likely to find. We've got a fully playable demo of Activision's ultra-violent coin-op conversion *Beast Busters*, then there're our two playable sections from Hawk's *Thrust*-like *The Executioner*, plus an inspired selection from the world of PD. The disk isn't our only covermount this month though. Full explanations below...

AND THIS IS DISK FOUR

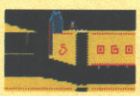
BEAST BUSTERS
Activision's excellent conversion of SNK's smash hit coin-op adds real horror to the first person shoot-'em-up, putting you up against zombies, werewolves and a host of other fear movie refugees. It's a bonkers gun-run through all manner of ghoulish bad guys – our guide to the gore-fest starts over the page...

THE EXECUTIONER
Two complete sections of new label Hawk's fiendishly addictive arcade adventure. The bits we have here are pure *Thrust*-inspired shoot-'em-up, but there's a lot more to the finished game than that – if you liked last month's playable section of *Exile*, you're in for a treat.

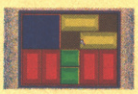


PLUS! THE PICK OF PD!

MAZEMAN For many people *PacMan* is still the definitive 'video game'. With *Mazeman* you get to control a close relative of the pill munching blob . It's more fun than you could possibly expect...



PHARAOH'S CURSE This original 8-bit style platformer is a big favourite in PD circles. Brace yourself for a dose of non-stop cavern-jumping, mummy-mashing action!



DAD No, we don't know why it's called this either! It's just like one of those old plastic toys where you have to move the squares around to get them in the right order – but 10 times as difficult!

TIPS POSTER

ALL-TIME top GAMES

Not content with giving you *Bombuzal* and *Kid Gloves* on our first two issues, we're going to show you how to complete them too – and what way could be better than with a giant, double-sided poster, showing you everything you could possibly need to know to take Complete Control of the two games? Simply mount it on the wall near your computer and you need never be stuck again – the only problem is deciding which side you're going to have staring down at you! (Why not buy two copies and get them both?)

SIDE A BOMBUZAL
Even with a poster this big, there are just too many levels in *Bombuzal* to take you through them all. That's why we've done the first 60, then concentrated on the 17 coded ones thereafter, to lead you right through the game. Gary Penn nearly killed himself doing all this, so you'd better appreciate the results!

SIDE B KID GLOVES
Our complete guide takes you through every last screen of *Kid Gloves*, showing you what you have to do (and where you have to do it) to complete the game. Stuart Campbell, *Kid*'s biggest fan, shows you how – you need never be stuck on that-particularly-tricky-bit-in-the-psychedelic-section-where-all-the-floors-are-deadly-to-the-touch again!

Not got either game, eh? Then quick! Flick to page 90...

disk FOUR

START ME UP

Loading any of the programs on this AMIGA POWER disk should be an easy and painless experience. Firstly, ensure that you've got a mouse plugged into Joystick Port One and a joystick plugged into Joystick Port Two. Switch your computer off, insert the disk into the internal drive, and switch the machine back on. After a short delay, you should be greeted with a menu screen. Choose which game or demo you want to play, then either press the appropriate Function Key, or move the mouse pointer onto the appropriate small box and click on it with the left mouse button. Your chosen game should now load and run, but, just to be on the safe side, don't remove the disk from the internal drive during play.

EMOTIONAL RESCUE

Don't get all upset and hysterical if you have problems loading any of the games on the disk. Simply follow these three easy steps to banish duff-disk misery forever.

1. First, try starting the whole loading process over again from scratch, ensuring that you don't have any extra peripherals attached to your Amiga.
2. If the disk appears to be corrupt, you may be able to correct it using the Disk Doctor program from the Workbench disk that came with your Amiga. (Instructions for using Disk Doctor can be found in your Amiga user's manual.)
3. If all else fails, just send the disk back to us (including details of your equipment configuration would be handy), and we'll rush a new one off to you as soon as possible. Please send the disk ONLY, not the whole magazine, to: *AMIGA POWER Disk Four Returns, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street Bath, Avon. BA1 2BW.*

BEAST BUSTERS

Publisher: Activision
Authors: Henry Clarke, Ken Jarvis, Matthew Simmons

The intro screen says it all...

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

To be perfectly frank, there's not a great deal to explain about *Beast Busters* – you should be able to figure most of it out within half a second of starting play. Arcade goers will already be familiar with this sideways-scrolling, first person perspective shoot-'em-up, distinguished from other machine gun-mounted coin-ops by it's non-military setting and sense of humour. Principle baddies in this, the first section of Activision's SNK conversion, are our old friends the walking dead. Set inside a decaying city populated almost entirely with animated corpses, the game is obviously another variation on the shooting gallery theme popularised by *Operation Wolf*, but it does some interesting things with the basic game style – particularly in the visuals department, where it gleefully reduces hostile zombies to, well, to their 'constituent parts.'

This AMIGA POWER preview is a generous snatch of the first level, taking place in and around a subway populated by zoms and rather aggressive werewolf-style dogs. Were this the full game and not a demo it'd then move into a vertically scrolling elevator scene, followed by a 'walking into the screen' street scene. (But since it isn't, there seems like little reason to dwell on them any further).

Oh dear – we're just a tad too late to really ruin these fellas' day with a couple of accurately tossed grenades. Armed Corpses are hard to miss – after all, they're blooming close to you, and there are an awful lot of the suckers. A bullet in the middle of the head has much the same effect on the baddies as stuffing a mad cow full of Semtex... and then feeding it match heads. (If you can imagine that).

Down in the tube station at midnight: child-like corpses change trains here. Don't make the mistake of thinking these are passing innocents – there ain't no such thing in this game.

KEEPING YOURSELF UNDER CONTROL

You can play in one or simultaneous two player mode using either two joysticks or a combination of mouse and 'stick. On the intro screen you'll be faced with a self explanatory options card, then it's into the game where it's simply a case of moving the control tool and pressing fire to release bullets. Grenades are available by hitting the left or right Shift buttons on the keyboard.

There's no need to worry about running out of bullets in this demo, but you would be well advised to save your grenades for those special moments when large gangs of evil dead guys attack together.

Remember, keeping the angry corpses away from your character is a matter of absolute priority, because for each hit you take you'll lose energy from your life-ometer, positioned at the top of the screen.

AND IF YOU WANT SOME MORE...

...you'll be able to pick up the complete game version of *Beast Busters* any time now for the standard sort of price of £25.99 from your local retailer.

JANE'S GUIDE TO ZOMBIE STREET SCUM AND OTHER HORRORS

ARMED CORPSE
The first and most dangerous bad guy, this rather revolting character pops up right in front of you, flashing a huge revolver. Since he's so close he's an immediate danger – get rid of him right away!

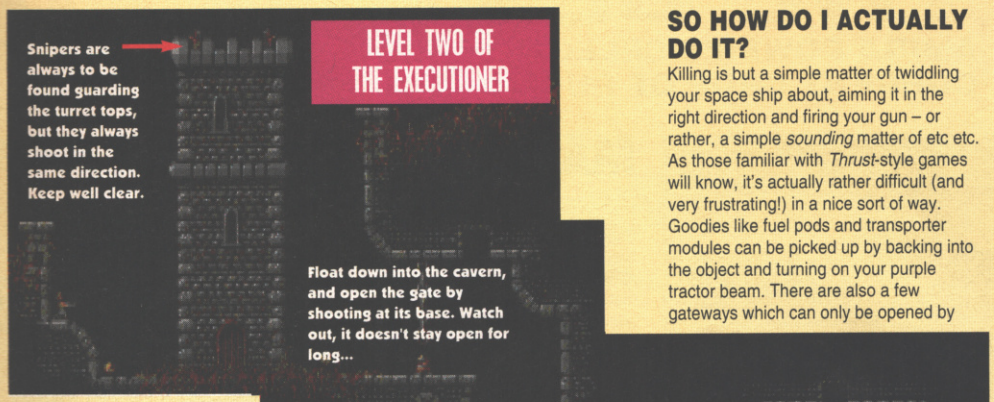
DEVIL DOGS
Just as nasty, they do a great deal of snarling and jumping around. While the dogs carry no weapons (being dogs), they are ridiculously fast and can seriously shorten your life expectancy if they get their fangs into you. Best to blast them before they get up too close, that's what we say.

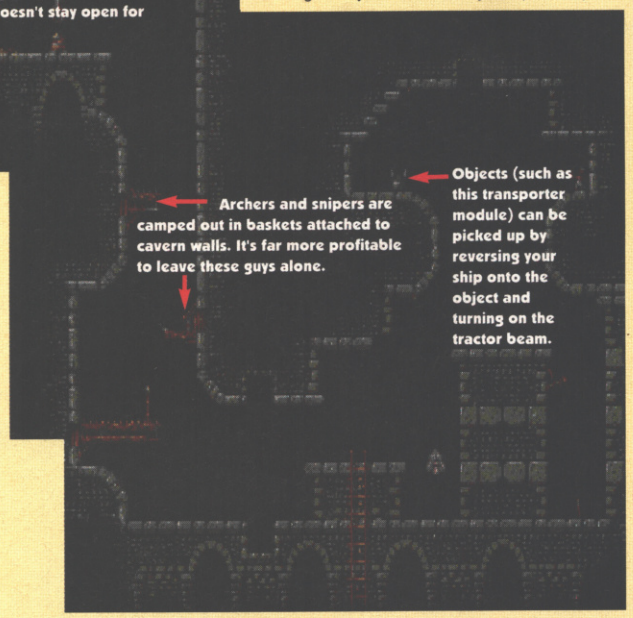
SNEAKY SCUMBAGS
Of less immediate importance are the Sneaky Scumbags who creep up on you while you're wasting the big guys. Just keep an eye out for these and make sure you waste them before they get too close – and don't start to feel sorry for the ones that look like (suspiciously blue) little kids either! That sort of mistake can be fatal. The best motto for players of *Beast Busters* is to KILL EVERYTHING.

PICKING UP TREATS
Once the action hots up you'll see plenty of ammunition magazines and grenades flying about the screen. Forget about the bad guys (for a split second, mind!) and shoot these instead – in doing so you'll collect them and add them to your (fast depleting) weapon stock. For the purposes of this preview it's merely a case of target practice, as you've plenty of bullets to play right through the demo from the offset. Having said that though, a few extra grenades wouldn't go far amiss.

Also worth watching out for is a First Aid box which whizzes across the field of play. Collecting that will latch a few more grades onto your life-ometer.

Devil Dogs in abundance! These deliciously illustrated mutant mongrels won't settle for a few Bonio Munchy Morsels, we're afraid.





THE EXECUTIONER

Publisher: Hawk
Authors: Andrew Prime, Stoo Cambridge, Doug Boari (sound)

IN THE BEGINNING...

Before we move onto this demo of new label Hawk's debut release, one thing has to be made clear. Although this playable preview features little in the way of strategy, the full game is by no means a straight shoot-'em-up – there's a story behind the action, and it involves lots of visiting planets and, erm, 'interviewing' the inhabitants. *The Executioner* is actually an unusual sort of arcade adventure, with your *Thrust*-style space craft skipping through cavern systems on various planets in search of the four keys that will eventually lead you to some evil wizard guy, who (of course) has to be killed.

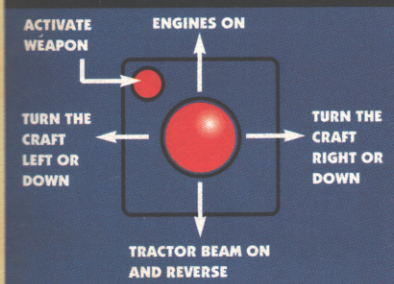
There are 120 planets to explore built up of six basic landscape types – Organic Worlds, Sandy Worlds, Medieval Worlds, Icy Worlds, Rocky Worlds and Futuristic Worlds. This demo features two Medieval sectors for you to try out. In the demo your only task is to fly around and kill the hostile soldiers and pick up a few of the goodies you'll find scattered around – all that taking-prisoners -and-pumping-them-for-information-on-the-whereabouts-of-the-keys business (not to mention the selling-them-at-trading-posts in order to buy some fuel) has been held over for the proper game.

SO HOW DO I ACTUALLY DO IT?

Killing is but a simple matter of twiddling your space ship about, aiming it in the right direction and firing your gun – or rather, a simple *sounding* matter of etc etc. As those familiar with *Thrust*-style games will know, it's actually rather difficult (and very frustrating!) in a nice sort of way. Goodies like fuel pods and transporter modules can be picked up by backing into the object and turning on your purple tractor beam. There are also a few gateways which can only be opened by shooting at the control mechanism – these aren't generally difficult to find.

The Executioner has been written by new programming team Hawk, and distributed by Impressions. Impressions boss David Lester explained: 'This isn't just another version of *Thrust*, or a straight shoot-'em-up. It's actually an adventure played out in an arcade format.'

THE EXECUTIONER: JOYSTICK CONTROL



Just one major thing to remember – easy does it, all the time. When we first received this demo we started haring around like idiots, and soon paid the price. Remember – if you so much as lightly scrape against anything, your game is over and it's back to the square one. Your little *Thrust*-like craft goes much, much faster than it needs to, so please be dainty. Whether you're blasting around in free space or edging your way though particularly perilous labyrinths, minimal joystick action is a must. In general, you'll never need more than a half-second burst of thrust, followed by a quick reverse.

You'd also be well advised to keep the auto-fire off – if you go mad with bullets they'll soon run out, and they don't come back unless you quit out of the game and start again. However, if you take it easy, the arsenal will replenish itself.

COLLECTABLES

POWER PODS
Little golden pots which add to your fuel dumps. Well worth collecting.

HOSTAGES
These guys jump up and down and wave their arms around like lunatics. They are extremely useful in the full game, but not much cop in this demo – it's safe to ignore them if you want.

KEYS
The whole point of the exercise is to pick these up. There are only four in the whole game though, and none in this demo, so there's not much point about saying anything more about them really, is there?

TRANSPORTER MODULES
Grey boxes with fans at the top. Useful in the full game – they would normally help you to get from one planet to

HOSTILES

Yep, there are plenty of these to be found about the place alright. Bear in mind, most of these don't have to be destroyed, and just passing by those which don't form an immediate threat is sometimes advisable. Remember that certain objects are much more useful if you don't blast them but pick them up...

SNIPERS
Usually to be found guarding the castle turrets or camped out in baskets attached the sides of walls, these will fire repeatedly in the same direction, which makes them sound fairly easily avoidable, and they would be too, if not for the fact that they're usually placed in strategic positions. Our suggestion: make it a priority to get rid of them.

ARCHERS
Again, these chaps are conditioned to fire the same way, and won't bother you if you steer well clear. However, their arrows are pretty huge, and are usually to be found zipping across the entrances to important locations, which could cause some problems.

FIRING FLOWERS
Semi-concealed in the brush, most of these can simply be ignored. A good job too – they're small and difficult to get close to, so if you're going to eliminate them, do it carefully.

BLOBS
Once inside the caverns it's worth watching out for drips of goo falling down from the roof. They drip regularly, so it's just a matter of timing things right to avoid them.

OBSTRUCTIONS
Just about everything you touch in this game will mean certain death – so don't! Some innocent looking objects, like shrubbery or woodwork, are especially difficult to negotiate.

UPWARDS SPIKES
These are long and pop out of the ground at regular intervals – having said that though, they're shouldn't cause much trouble. The tips're always visible so it's easy to steer clear.

SLINGSHOT
Weird little character who hides in the caverns, slinging bullets across the places where you're likely to be hanging out. Best to eliminate these guys on sight – it'll save you some trouble later on.

HIDDEN GUN
Fires downwards from the roof of caverns and is extremely difficult to take out. Steer clear.

disk FOUR

THE BEST OF PD

AMIGA POWER'S SELECTION FROM THE BEST OF THE CURRENT CROP OF PUBLIC DOMAIN GAMES

VIC-20 Days are here again (for those of you too young to remember, the VIC-20 was Commodore's big selling machine before the C64).

PHARAOH'S CURSE

In this month's visit to Deja Vu Corner, we're proud to bring you a real blast from the past in the shape of *Pharaoh's Curse*, a conversion of an original VIC-20 game from the same team who did last month's *Frantic Freddie*.

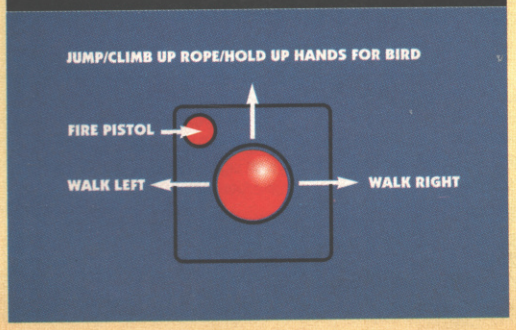
Pharaoh's Curse is a platform arcade game in the style of *Jet Set Willy* (the Spectrum classic that's one of the biggest-selling computer games of all time), and involves your un-named little character on a quest to ransack the tombs of the Pharaohs for gold and treasure. Attempting to stop him are a mummy and one of the Pharaoh's slaves, who run around either trying to collide with our hero or shoot him, and so deprive him of one of his two lives. He can, of course, shoot back at them, but killing them is only a temporary solution, and they'll soon return. The other inhabitant of the tombs is a small bird – harmless to the touch, but he can provide a helping hand for our little chap. If he holds his hands in the air when the bird is near, it will pick him up and carry him away through several screens, hopefully depositing him in a place of relative safety.

Otherwise the game is completely straightforward – just run around the screens (don't worry about big drops, you can fall from any height without hurting yourself), climb up ropes, collect the flashing treasures, grab keys to open doors, avoid the little volcanoes, and generally try not to get killed by the bad guys.

BUT IS IT ANY GOOD?

Do write and let us know if you'd like to see this sort of thing on the cover disk, or if you'd prefer to see original Amiga games instead of 8-bit ports. Better still, write to Bignonia (the programming team responsible) at the address on the *Pharaoh's Curse* loading screen and get them to convert some real C64 classics – then hopefully we'll be able to bring you a few more trips down Memory Lane. (Or alternatively, you'll be able to see just what it was you were missing all those years.)

JOYSTICK CONTROL FOR PHARAOH'S CURSE



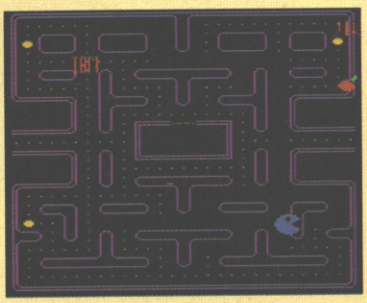
MAZEMAN

Following on from last month's *Amoeba Invaders*, this month's piece of arcade history is *PacMan*. One of the real legends of video-gaming, this was the first game that attracted significant numbers of female players into the arcades, and one of the first to have a serious spin-off effect into other areas of the media.

You should remember some of these, of course – there were *PacMan* cartoons, *PacMan* watches, *PacMan* records, *PacMan* board games, *PacMan* bubblegum, *PacMan* breakfast cereal, you name it. All of which wasn't bad going for a character who was little more than a yellow circle with a wedge cut out of it.

This version departs from the original by having some different maze layouts and a couple of minor extra features, but the gameplay remains essentially the same. Using the joystick, you guide the *PacMan* (sorry, *Mazeman*) around the maze, eating the small white dots and avoiding the ghosts (or in this version, Atari, Apple and IBM logos) which continuously chase you. If you eat any of the larger yellow dots found in the four corners or the centre of the maze, the Mazeman will change colour to a chequered pattern for a time, during which period he can run over the ghosts for extra points. (Beware though – after you've eaten a ghost, it will reappear from the ghost pen at the centre of the screen, and be restored to its usual deadly self.)

When you've eaten all the white dots (you don't have to eat the yellow ones), you'll have completed the screen and will move onto the next one, which will either have a different maze or be the same as the previous one, but with all the walls made invisible. The only other thing you need to know is that the ghosts slow down slightly when they go through the tunnels (centre left and centre right) and when they pass over the ghost pen – knowledge which may prove useful in a tight spot. Oh, and this version doesn't have any sound, so you'll have to make the 'wocka wocka' noises yourself. Get munching!



The classic, and rather essential, *Mazeman*.

MAZEMAN CONTROLS

Simply push UP/ DOWN/ LEFT/ RIGHT on the joystick to move the Mazeman in the desired direction.

DAD

We've got another mind-stretching puzzler for you this month, in the shape of this funny little game of block-shunting. The idea is to move the large blue block from the top left corner of the screen to the top right corner by shifting all the other blocks around to make space beside it. Simply click on the leading edge of a block and, if possible, it will move into the adjacent space. And that's pretty much it, really.

HEY! IT'S A MINI-COMPETITION!

Dad is incredibly simple to play, but immensely difficult to beat (none of us have managed it yet), so if you have a solution, write in and tell us. The first person to find a solution will be receiving five free games in the post. Fuller game instructions (well, not very much fuller) can be found on the disk in the file entitled 'Dad Documentation'. Good luck!

DAD CONTROLS

Use the mouse to click on the leading edge of the piece you want to move.

Infuriating, bizarre, totally addictive. That's *Dad*.

IBM PC & Compatibles

CBM AMIGA

ATARI ST

WILD WHEELS

My head is thumpin', and my heart is pumping the adrenalin around every vessel of my hyper-tense body - the 'driving unit', that will be shoe-horned, wedged like a Colt 45 into it's holster, as I am placed into the command seat of my vehicle - ready to enter the arena of play... and combat.

"Wild Wheels" they call us. Combatants who play a "game" - a game where there are two ways to lose... down on points or down on fuel - the fuel of life! Our "kit" for action are the finely honed masterpieces of engineering... machines that will **pole-axe the opposition,** melt them, crush them, detonate them into a million white-hot, speeding grains of shrapnel. The 'kit of death' in which many of us will experience our last, and final, blinding flash.

In the arena, the game becomes a **struggle to win,** a fight for life. The noise from the screaming crowd is drowned by the incessant roar of the mighty heart of this **mechanoid beast,** it's engine pushing out every ounce of power to keep me just ahead, and delivering a heavy, sickening blow into my back as it accelerates at my command. Taking aim, I firm up every muscle ready for the great burst, the deafening scream as I unleash my **lethal messenger...** and its message - "GAME OVER!"

But that's just half the game story. Now **YOU** enter the arena...

ENJOY THE SHOW!

ocean®

OCEAN SOFTWARE LIMITED
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NEWS

WILL CARTRIDGES NEVER HAPPEN?

Amiga owners looking forward to playing huge games stored on instantly loadable cartridges are in for a disappointment. System 3 – who were at the forefront of this, with highly publicised plans to release games on cartridge format – have now decided against pushing ahead.

The Pinner-based software house were working towards releasing an enormous cartridge version of their forthcoming *Silly Putty* later this year, but found that the costs were far too high. After doing their sums, System 3 estimated that *Putty* would have cost gamers a seriously prohibitive £60. The normal sized version of the game is to be launched on standard magnetic disk next month.

Supporters of the cartridge idea point out three main advantages over floppy disks:

• Larger games can be stored on cartridge. That means not just more levels or a greater playing area, but also the opportunity to pull in bigger and better graphics and sound.

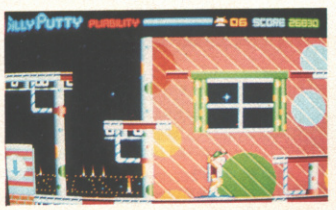
• A cartridge would plug straight into the printer port at the back of your Amiga, so there would be no waiting for games to load, no messing around with multi-disk games and you wouldn't have to buy a cartridge drive. Also, with games involving many screens there is a far faster rate of accessibility between different areas of the game.

• Of more importance to the software publishers than the rest of us is the piracy question. Cartridges are exceptionally difficult to copy, thus knocking out the perennial piracy problem at a stroke.

System 3's Adrian Cale is still optimistic though. 'It's far too expensive a project for one company to undertake,' he said 'but if a few of us get together we could make it work'.

Programming outfit Vivid Image were working on the technical side on behalf of System 3. Boss John Twiddy explained: 'There weren't really any technical problems but it was all a matter of cost. People were interested, but they didn't like the amount of money involved. Interest has seriously subsided.'

Silly Putty would have been twice as big on cartridge, and impossible to pirate. Still, the floppy version should be worth a look when it arrives next month...



...it's a 50 level arcade fantasy affair centred around an amorphous blob of jelly. There's no hacking, slaying or kicking, it's more stretching, bouncing and oozing.

TAKE A TIP

Are we ever going to see the Amiga version of Anco's *Kick-Off* like basketball game *Tip-Off*? Our spies tell us that Anco have the game complete and ready in their vaults, but have still not decided whether or not to release it because of console commitments. Anco's boss Anil Gupta was not in a chatty mood on the subject when we gave him a buzz. 'I haven't made my mind up yet,' he said mysteriously.

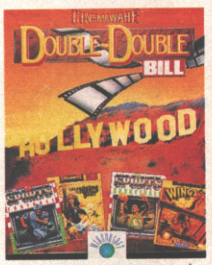
DIZZY BUSY

A compilation of old and new *Dizzy* games is to be released by Code Masters later this year. The Codies, who reckon full price games are 'a rip off', are rewriting some of the early 8-bit *Dizzy* games for the Amiga with 'some special extras'. There should also be a brand new *Dizzy* game included in the five title pack. Expect an arrival some time in November with a price not unadjacent to £19.95.

BIZARRE BOTTS

MicroProse are continuing their forays into the high powered world of arcade machines with a 3D combat extravaganza called *BOTTS*. An Amiga conversion has already been pencilled in for next year. *Battle of the Solar System* features lashings of implausibly large robots throwing hell and fire at one another. The so-called Warbots move around first-person-perspective-3D-land junking anything they contact. Graphics verge on the dazzling, and gameplay is even more accessible than MicroProse's last (and highly recommended) release, the excellent *F-15 Strike Eagle II* (AP 87 per cent). Robot fans are having it very easy at the moment – we've had the recent *Metal Masters* from Infogrames, *Metal Mutant* from Palace, and games like Michael (*Powerdrome*) Powell's *Cyberfight* from EA to look forward to. (We think we can safely say it's become something of a trend).

CINEMAWARE BACK FROM THE DEAD



***Double Double Bill*: four from Cinemaware (who nearly never made it).**

When a dodgy software publisher responsible for nothing but dogs and disasters slides into the great abyss nobody really cares a hoot, but it's a different matter when the same thing happens to a group of top-notch creative types.

Warming news then, that innovative American software developers Cinemaware have been rescued from disaster. Brit publisher Mirrorsoft, who've been handling Cinemaware's kit over here for the past five years, have splashed out on the Cinemaware name, thus allowing work on forthcoming releases like *Rollerbabes*, *TV Sports Boxing* and *TV Sports Baseball* to continue.

Cinemaware – who made a name for themselves with now-familiar games such as *Defender of the Crown*, *Rocket Ranger* and *TV Sports Football* – were completely skint until Mirrorsoft stepped in. Now a new company has been set up, called Acme Interactive, who will write games for release on the Cinemaware label.

Mirrorsoft's boss Peter Billota boomed: 'Cinemaware was our most popular affiliate label. I'm sure many entertainment software fans will feel extremely satisfied that we will still be able to publish their games.'

There's little mystery about the nature of the two up–and–coming TV Sports games, but you may not know about *Rollerbabes*. It's a fast, violent and futuristic team game (a la *Speedball*) for up to eight(!) players featuring teams like the Eraser Heads (a group of school teachers), the Buzzcuts (a team of hairdressers) and, of course, the fabulous, all-female Rollerbabes. Teams compete on a circular Rollerball-style track in a game that combines racing, fighting and trap avoiding.

WANTED: STOLEN AMIGA GAMES

Top programmer and graphics artist Kevin Bulmer is in a foul mood, and who can blame him? The author of such memorables as *Gauntlet II* and *Corporation* has recently suffered a burglary at his Wolverhampton home, the thieves responsible making away with his prized Amiga 3000, as well as disks containing tons of games code.

'The machine is full of code, animation and graphics from projects I'm working on,' he wailed. 'But, to make things worse, the thieves also got away with my back-up disks. There were hours of work there, and I'm really not looking forward to doing it all again. The inspiration has gone.'

Kevin's working on *Terminator II* for Ocean, but luckily only a few bits of code for that game has gone missing, and the October release date still stands. However, he's appealed for anyone who comes across his goodies to get in touch.

'The burglars took everything of value, so they weren't just after the computer. Somebody will buy that Amiga without knowing it's stolen. I don't want them to trash the code, just to get the games back to me. I'm prepared to pay out a small reward.' Anyone who can help should get in touch with the AMIGA POWER office at the usual address.

COMPETITION

With Ocean's upcoming *Darkman* Here we have 21 prizes up for grabs in another excessively simple competition.

WIN A MINI TV!

Darkman goodies up for grabs.

This time all you have to do is answer two stupidly easy questions to have a chance to get your hands on:

- A Casio hand-held TV set.
- One of ten 'groovy' Ocean polo shirts.
- One of ten copies of *Darkman*, the game of the movie.

Ocean scooped the *Darkman* games licence because they reckoned it was such a great movie, and who could disagree? Funny, horrific, action-packed, it was packed with sequences that seemed tailor-made for converting into sub-games – as we'll be able to see soon, when the game hits the streets.

But enough guff, here are the questions:

1) Why did Darkman turn into a crime fighter?

2) What makes Darkman that much tougher than all the crooks?

Just jot some answers onto a bit of paper and pop it into an envelope addressed to *AMIGA POWER Darkman Competition, 29 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW.* Don't delay!

FLAMES OF FREEDOM – IT'S PRETTY BLOODY HUGE

Maelstrom are currently polishing off the eagerly (and long) awaited follow-up to *Midwinter*. Eagerly awaited because a) the first game was so popular and b) because it was actually pretty blooming good (if flawed in a number of ways), long awaited because, well, because we've been looking to review it since before we began AMIGA POWER and it still isn't finished yet!

Flames of Freedom, like its predecessor, is a strategy 'epic' which is as simple as it is (ahem) confusing. Here's the scene: it's first person 3D time again as you make your way through dozens of islands (tropical this time, as opposed to ice-covered) in an attempt to rid the archipelagos of an evil dictator type. You can choose your own character profile (sex, looks, physical attributes and psychology) before setting off across 500,000 square miles of fractal landscapes. There's enough hardware here to fill a Chuck Norris movie, but don't get carried away with the firepower – the best part of the game should be the interacting with 4,000 or so characters who inhabit this world. Some are enemies, some are friends, and with some you can't tell. (Just like real life, basically).

1. *Flames of Freedom* covers a 500,000 square mile area, but you can speed up travel times on the control panel (otherwise you'd be hanging around between islands for donkey's years).

2. You can make up your own appearance (you can be man or woman, but not both) – though whoever wanted to look like this guy must have been pretty damn ugly in real life!

3. All modes of transport use the same control system, to avoid total and utter confusion. This one's a jeep, and it is possible to leap from your vehicle, Timothy Dalton like, onto anything that happens to pass by.

4. Into the submarine and under the waves. Maelstrom's Mike Singleton says drawing the waves was 'a real accomplishment – they act as you'd expect them to.'

5. All those little brown circles on this island are people with whom you can have a chat. It's worth clicking on each icon to find out if they're going to help you or blow your head off.

6. Looks like this chap isn't one of the good guys, but there are plenty of useful folk hanging around. They may ask you to complete assignments for them before they risk anything though.

There are 13 weapons to choose from, and any one of 22 modes of transport to utilise. And – biggest news of the lot! – if MicroProse are to be believed (and who are we to argue?), the game will be with us by late September. (Hurrah!)

CRIB SHEETS

Continuing our series of quick guides to people, publishers, and programmers in the news. This month it's...

No 4 MILLENNIUM

Contact: St. John's Innovation Centre, Cowley Road, Cambridge, Cambs.

History: Originally the leisure wing of a larger publisher called Logotron. Top employees Michael Hayward and Ian Saunter bought the games section out in March 1990 and almost immediately scored a big hit with *Kid Gloves*. Since then they have released ten games of differing quality.

People: Apart from the the two managerial people, there are four programmers/ games designers and two graphic artists. One of the smallest independent publishers in the country, they also rely on freelance programmers.

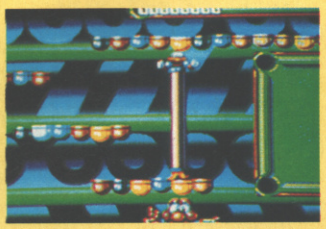
Greatest successes: Over to marketing/ development manager Ian Saunter: 'Last Christmas we launched *James Pond* which was a huge hit. It had all the hallmarks of a good game, lots of playability, was graphically amusing without being overly cute, and had a great soundtrack. It was a spoof licence to combat all the really big licences that were coming out at the time. We wanted to poke some fun.'

Biggest cock-up: We released *Yolanda* at a time when people were asking for 16-bit versions of 8-bit games. It was an updated version of a C64 game called *Hercules*. We wanted to write a games player's game, a challenging platform game. In the end it was probably too difficult – perhaps the most difficult game ever! – and it sunk without a trace.'

Typical Millennium game: 'It's all been a bit haphazard so far. We've done racing, sports, arcade, puzzles, shoot-'em-ups, we've played with vector graphics and heavy sprite-based games. The only thing we haven't really tried is adventures, and that's coming next.'

Typical industry comment: 'Well, they make the most of limited resources. A role model for small software publishers. And do you spell their name with one or two "n"s?'

Things to come: A 3D isometric adventure called *Robin Hood* (September) which is getting a lot of coverage at the moment, *Robocod* (November), the follow-up to *James Pond* (which is bound to be worth trying out) and *Chinto's Revenge* (November), a cartoony beat-'em-up.

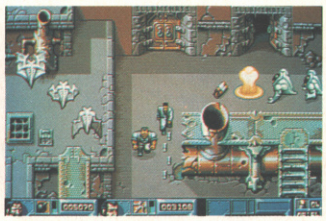


***Robocod* – the forthcoming sequel to Millennium's smash spoof *James Pond*.**

Final word: Millennium relies on the much larger publisher US Gold to actually sell and distribute its games, but it is not merely a USG controlled label. 'We write the games, which is what we enjoy, and we keep our own autonomy and identity. We just let US Gold do all the hard selling.'

JUST WHAT IS A CHAOS ENGINE?

It's those tres arty and oh-so-moody Bitmap people.



Overhead-view multi-level questing time in the first part of *The Chaos Engine*.

The Bitmap Brothers have broken cover with the announcement of their new project – a Victorian-style shoot-'em-up-with-knobs-on called *The Chaos Engine*. Taking the famous *Gauntlet* overhead-view perspective, it throws you and up to two chums into a giant four world, multi-level quest, with the survival of the world at stake!

But what, pray tell, is a 'Chaos Engine'? Well, inspiration for the Bitmaps came from Charles Babbage's Analytical Engine, a never-built Victorian design for an adding machine currently being put together at the Science Museum in London – though (of course) this computer game version is a much more complex and dangerous proposition.

The place is Victorian England after some major global catastrophe, and the incredible brainchild of mad genius Baron Fortesque has gone horribly out of control, ripping apart the very fabric of time and space! Six adventurers – you get to pick which three you play – prepare to storm the Baron's country house and shut down the Engine, little knowing that they'll have to cross forests, great industrial workshops and other hostile zones thrown up by the machine before they reach it.

Even worse, the Engine's chaotic emissions have thrown up a vast range of hostile monsters to encounter, many of which exhibit a semblance of intelligent behaviour much like that seen in previous Bitmap release *Gods*.

In fact, much of the feel of the game would seem to be similar to that of *Gods*, the biggest difference (beyond the obvious gameplay variations given by the overhead viewpoint) being the multi-player option. Even in single player mode, a squad of three – controlled simultaneously – is employed, the behaviour of the characters determined to some extent by their various personalities and attributes. This, it is said, will give even a single player the feeling of being involved in a multi-player game.

'A lot of our incentive was to try and provide an interactive, multi-player experience for one person,' says game designer Phil Wilcock. 'We've used the behaviour modelling techniques from *Gods* to give all the characters personalities – at any one time you'll be controlling one character with the other two following along, occasionally wandering off slightly if bonus items or enemies distract them. The player will be able to swap between lead characters as he sees fit – some will be better at knocking down doors, say, while others will be skilled in combat – and, indeed, swap his whole squad around, choosing completely new characters from the overall party, at regular points in the game.'

'Obviously, we wanted something where we could use the Victorian setting – all those nice brass dials and rivets and so on – without being totally limited by reality. This game design allows us to put in pretty much anything we like, though we're not going to go too overboard. The idea is to create a sort of dark, futuristic version of Industrial Revolution England, a sort of Victorian holocaust. It'll certainly be ready for Christmas – that's unless they get the thingy at the Science Museum finished before then of course, and it happens to go out of control and start ripping the fabric of time and space in real life! Then we might have to start thinking about putting the release date back a bit. Ha ha.'

ROCK-HARD QUIZ

Compiled by Gary Penn

Jean-Claude Van Damme? Jean-Shrimpton Van Driver more like. Chuck Norris? Chuck No-Wrist's more appropriate. Steven Segal? Steven's A Gal I think you might find. None of these so-called tuff guys is hard enough to have a go at this quiz and win. But are you? There are no prizes on offer. The acknowledgement of being tougher than they come should be reward enough, especially if you can identify the link between the five answers.

1) The home computer-grown sequel to the coin-operated racing simulation which was almost used to test driving skills.
2) The Assembly Line's platform prank, released twice at full price.
3) Peter Cooke's Old Testament tribute.
4) A Taito puzzler. One for Guy Fawkes?
5) A cartographer's dream from the coder qualified to produce missile warheads, would you believe?

WE'LL SAY THIS ONLY ONCE...

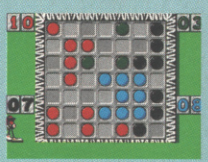
Alternative have found themselves a nice little niche with budget TV spin offs, but *'Allo 'Allo* will represent something of a departure. In the past, they've relied upon the fancies of youngsters with simple affairs such as *Postman Pat* and *Edd the Duck*. *'Allo 'Allo* , which should arrive in September, may be puerile but it's surely not aimed at ten-years–olds, so we're a bit unsure about who's meant to actually buy it. Still, expect a basic, simple, safe platform game, packed with bad jokes and – despite the naffness – quite possibly worth eight quid of anybody's money.

AMIGA POWER RECOMMENDS

Looking for the cream of the crop? Then here are our fave raves from the past few months...

TOKI
(Ocean)

The closest thing yet to a perfect arcade conversion (or is it? - see *R-Type II* this issue), *Toki* brings the Amiga some of its loveliest graphics ever, tied up with a game that's enormously slick and playable in the best coin-op traditions. It's a shame that there's so little of it, but even so you're getting a big chunk of game for your money, and quality rather than quantity is the over-riding concern.



SPOT
(Leisure Genius)

Looking nothing whatsoever like any other board game in the history of mankind, *Spot* is such a cracker that it manages to transcend some of terrible presentation , and the most obnoxious central character since Nathan the Brat. In true classic style, it's easy to learn, yet frighteningly difficult to become really good at, and a wide range of options makes it suitable for all the family.

DEUTEROS
(Activision)

Something of a minority interest, but for fans of *Millennium 2.2*, *Supremacy* and the like it's exactly what they've been waiting for. At first you don't really know what you're supposed to be doing, but as the game develops everything becomes clear, and you get sucked in further with every passing minute, until time begins to have no meaning. One of the games of the year.

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II
(MicroProse)

Very possibly the best Amiga flight sim so far (Gary still prefers *FA/18 Interceptor*), and certainly one of the most playable, *F-15 II* combines just the right amount of realism and blasting action with some excellent 3D. The hefty £35 price tag may put a lot of people off, but those who lighten their wallets for it will feel it was worth every penny.

SWITCHBLADE II
(Gremlin)

This gorgeous game has been the subject of some debate in our mailbag, with letters both for and against Stuart's glowing appraisal of it in Issue Two. The fact of the matter is, though, that this is just about the most enjoyable arcade game to have appeared in the office since AMIGA POWER began, and that alone makes it something that every Amiga games player should own.

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND
(US Gold)

Still our highest-ever marked game, this gets loaded up in the office whenever there's a spare moment. Loved as much for the humour as for the adventure itself, there's still a lot of game lurking underneath all the witty barbs and bad puns, and Guybrush Threepwood looks set to be Amiga owners' favourite hero for quite some time.

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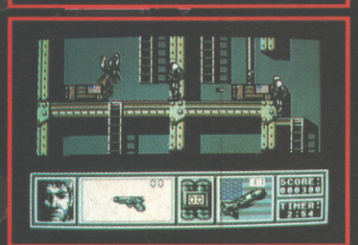

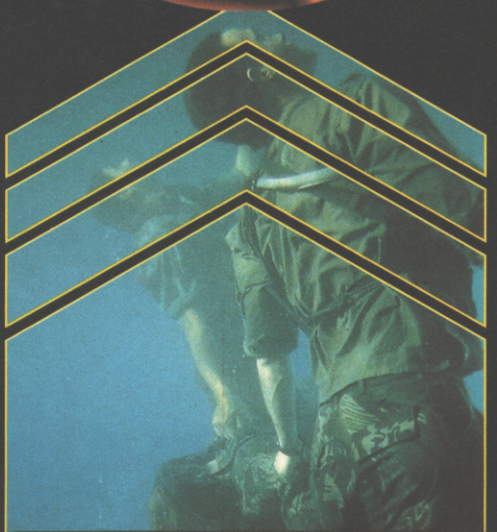

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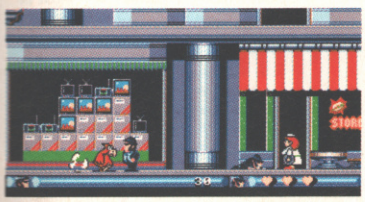
'ON A MISSION FROM GOD': THE BLUES BROTHERS HIT THE AMIGA

Sometimes a licensed product comes along and you get to thinking, 'Yes, of course – why didn't anybody think of making a game of that before?' *The Original Blues Brothers Game* from Titus is just like that – the characters are right, the game (from what we've seen of it) seems to be right, the music (potentially, at any rate) is spot on, and – hey! – there's a two player mode automatically built in and just begging to be used.

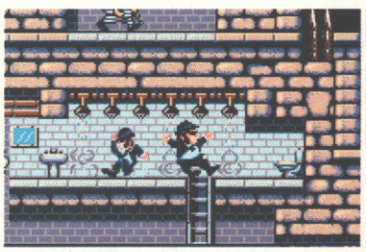
First thing you should know is that it's not based, not in any real sense, on the cult hit film. True, the nominal plot sees Jake and/or Elwood making his/their rather chaotic way towards a big concert opportunity – as in the movie – picking up amps, guitars, microphones and the like on route, but that's really as far as it goes. The six gigantic levels, set in locations like prisons, sewers and under-construction skyscrapers, seem based more on the likes of *Mario* games or *The New Zealand Story* than anything – cute, crisp graphics, secret rooms, mystery bonuses, and gameplay that includes every platform trick in the book, from floating on balloons to running along conveyor belts to jumping from lift to lift and so on. 50 frames of animation to the two main characters and a wide range of baddies add real personality to the proceedings too, and the music ('We've just got to get this bit right,' admit Titus) should be the icing on the cake – five songs are planned, with 'Everybody Needs Somebody,' and 'Peter Gunn' pencilled in for sure.

To us this looks like it could easily be the best Titus release to date – we can't wait until a finished version comes into the office. The game is scheduled for a late September release.

Plenty of animation frames add character...



The neat cartoon look of the Blues Brothers sprites bodes well for the finished game.



...even if you can't always tell what's happening!

ROCK-HARD QUIZ THE ANSWERS

1) ***Hard Drivin' II: Drive Harder***
2) ***Helter Skelter***
3) ***Tower Of Babel***
4) ***Plotting***
5) ***Spindizzy Worlds***

And the missing link is ... a bit crap, really. Each title features a built-in construction kit.

RACE APACE

We hear that Storm's big Christmas release *Big Run* is coming on apace. Based on a fairly obscure Jaleco racing coin-op, it's an into-the screen *OutRun* style driving game tied loosely into the Paris/Dakar rally. The maps are the same as in the original game and many of the graphics have been ported over directly – only one player, but the game is looking fast and fun. Indeed, Storm seem so keen on it they're working on another racing game for next year, based on the coin-op *Indy Heat*. Imagine *Ivan 'Iron Man' Stewart's Super Off Road Racer* with little Formula One style cars instead of trucks and you'll be more than half way there. Licensed from Leland/Trade West (the *Iron Man* people) it's out due some time next year.

ALL TOGETHER NOW

Domark are launching a couple of thematic compilations, based on sports and three dimensionalness.

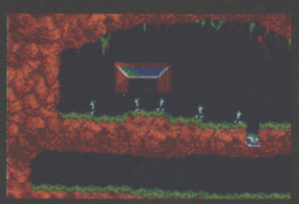
***Grandstand* costs thirty quid and features the excellent *Pro Tennis Tour* and *World Class Leaderboard*, and the not so excellent *Gazza's Super Soccer* and *Continental Circus*. *Virtual Worlds* is a compendium of four Incentive games – *Castle Master*, *Driller*, *Total Eclipse* and the previously unreleased sequel to Castle Master, *The Crypt*. That also costs £30, which the mathematically gifted will realise, works out at £7.50 per game.**

OH NO! LEMMINGS ALERT!

Yes, we're afraid the game that everyone is still talking about has no intention of going away. You see, a *Lemmings Construction Kit* is being planned for release later this year which will allow you to design and build a series of fiendish labyrinths. According to Psygnosis its going to be 'as big as *3D Construction Kit*' (ie enormous).

Lemmings nuts can also look forward to a *Lemmings Data Disk* which will be making an appearance in September, and then there's *Lemmings II* which we expect to see early next year.

And if that's not enough, there's also going to be a *Lemmings* coin-op. Discussions are 'going ahead' between Psygnosis and a number of throbbish coin-op people, and presuming an agreement is reached the *Lemmings* should be all over your local arcade by late autumn.



***Lemmings*: Deep breath...*Lemmings Construction Kit*, *Lemmings Data Disk*, *Lemmings II*, *Lemmings* coin-op...phew.**

Oh dear...

In which some truly awful games continue to get what's been coming to them for a very long time.

No4 HUMAN KILLING MACHINE (US Gold)

You'd think they'd learn, wouldn't you? After the unmitigated disaster that was *Street Fighter* (see the budget section this issue for more info), USG brought out this pseudo-sequel that was in several ways – incredibly – even worse than its completely appalling predecessor.

Mind you, it's hard to put your finger on just what it is that's so bad about it. It's not the animation, certainly. Both frames of it are very nice. It wasn't any lack of lastability, having to knock out every single opponent three times saw to that. Having said that, it wasn't so difficult that it became frustrating either – the fact that you could kill everyone just by repeatedly kicking them in the ankles ensured that this was a game all the family could get rewarding enjoyment from. And it can't have been any lack of cuteness and character, the lovable lickle doggie in Level Two that jumped up at you and licked your face (well, that's what it looked like, anyway) gave *Rainbow Islands et al* a real run for their money and no mistake. Even the music was useful – just leave the windows open and turn the volume up and you could scare the birds away from your garden for days at a time.

Another highly-realistic computer representation of a female from *HKM*.

Nope, on second thoughts, *Human Killing Machine* is one of the great unsung classics of our time, sadly under-rated by all and sundry and due for a major critical reappraisal any day now.

And the Poll Tax was a really good idea. And I'm the Archbishop Of Canterbury.

WAR ZONE

Electronic Arts have scooped a bunch of Three Sixty games from the US which are to be launched here over the next few months.

You may remember Three Sixty from the likes of *Harpoon* and *Das Boot* and you've probably heard of the up and coming *Megafortress*, all of which reach these shores courtesy of Mindscape. Now EA is taking over their UK distribution and plans are afoot to bring us a World War II North African tank simulation called *Sands of Fire* almost immediately, closely followed by a multi-player action strategy game called *Armor* (sic) *Valley*.

Also, keep your eyes peeled for a game called *Patriot*, which will be a land based version of the frighteningly realistic World War Three strategy epic *Harpoon*.

Plus, first signs of Olympics Fever are showing themselves with Three Sixty's announcement of *1992 Olympics Simulation* (the release date of which is not yet decided).

We expect quite a few developers to be working on athletics types games over the next year. Be ready for them...

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER & THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND (Storming through)

No sooner had these two clambered to the top of the chart than publisher US Gold were releasing details of sequels. From SSI comes *Eye of the Beholder II*, which the San Francisco strategy specialists reckon will be ready before the end of this year. SSI have their work cut out for them – we're waiting for two other major projects to be completed, namely *Buck Rogers* and *Gateway to the Savage Frontier*.

According to US Gold, *Beholder* has sold twice as many as had been predicted (figures of 20,000 have been touted although that's for the PC as well as on the Amiga).

***Monkey Island*, which last month made an appearance at number ten, is to be followed by *Le-Chuck's Revenge* (Le-Chuck being the ghostly adversary from the first game). That won't be here until February at the earliest because, in fairness, Lucasfilm are up to their ears in the likes of *Indiana Jones IV* (that's the game of the movie that never was) and something called *Dark Horse*, which is apparently based on a number of American comic book heroes.**

CYBERCON III (Surprisingly slow)

US Gold's bumper month was spoiled slightly by *Cybercon III*'s absolute refusal to make it anywhere near the top twenty. An entry placing of 53 is pretty dismal for a game that's scooped just about every accolade magazine reviewers can splash

***Cybercon III* – poor performance**

out. The fact that it had only been out for half of the time covered by the survey goes some way to explaining it's poor performance, but you'd have expected more life from this 3D extravaganza (which we gave 88 per cent). Maybe 3D has fallen out of vogue.

Meanwhile, programming team The Assembly Line, are busying themselves with a huge project for Disney (no less). We understand that the game involves aeroplanes, but beyond that it's all a bit of a mystery...

3D CONSTRUCTION KIT (Dismal showing, but why is it here?)

Domark's games creation program illustrates the danger of shoving a piece of software which isn't strictly, or even loosely, a game into a games chart. Dealers report sales far higher than the chart position suggests, and Domark claim it is outperforming even their biggest selling game to date, *MiG 29*. AMIGA POWER praised the program with an 80 per cent rating, and buyers seem to agree. Domark's Claire Edgeley explains: 'It's not something that will be

AMIGA POWER GALLUP CHARTS

AMIGA TOP 100

***** Exceptional ***** Nearly there **** Very good *** Has its moments ** Flawed * Dire

1 (12) EYE OF THE BEHOLDER US Gold £30.99 *****

2 (10) THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND US Gold £29.99 *****

3 (4) FANTASY WORLD DIZZY Code Masters £6.99 ****

4 (NE) KICK OFF – WINNING TACTICS Anco £12.99

5 (6) PGA TOUR GOLF Electronic Arts £25.99 *****

6 (NE) LOMBARD RAC RALLY Hit Squad £7.99 ***

7 (NE) F15 STRIKE EAGLE II MicroProse £29.99 *****

8 (NE) 3D POOL Mirror Image £9.99 ****

9 (13) NORTH AND SOUTH Action Sixteen £7.99 ****

10 (21) HERO QUEST Gremlin ****

11 (3) DEFENDER OF THE CROWN
Mirror Image £9.99 ***

12 (8) LEMMINGS
Psygnosis*****

13 (NE) XENON II
Mirror Image £9.99 ****

14 (20) TREASURE ISLAND DIZZY
Code Masters £4.99 ****

15 (NE) TOKI Ocean £24.99 *****

16 (7) MIAMI CHASE Code Masters £7.99 ****

17 (11) LITTLE PUFF IN DRAGONLAND
Code Masters £6.99 **

18 (NE) FULL CONTACT Team 17 £9.99

19 (1) ARMOUR-GEDDON
Psygnosis £25.99 ****

20 (9) NINJA RABBITS Micro Value £6.99

21 (37) CARRIER COMMAND
Mirror Image £9.99 *****

22 (NE) RAILROAD TYCOON
MicroProse £34.99 *****

23 (18) SPEEDBALL 2 Image Works £24.99 *****

24 (2) GODS Renegade £25.53 *****

25 (NE) SWITCH BLADE 2 Gremlin £25.99 *****

26 (NE) CENTURION Electronic Arts £24.99 ***

27 (NE) CRICKET SIMULATOR
Soundware £24.99

28 (23) FINAL WHISTLE Anco £12.99 ****

29 (22) STEVE DAVIS WORLD SNOOKER
CDS £9.99 **

30 (25) INTERNATIONAL KARATE +
Hit Squad £7.99 *****

31 (16) SHERMAN M4 Action 16 £29.99 ***

32 (40) CJ'S ELEPHANT ANTICS
Code Masters £6.99 **

33 (33) KICK OFF + EXTRA TIME
Anco £7.99 *****

34 (14) ROCKET RANGER
Mirror Image £9.99 ****

35 (NE) LIFE AND DEATH
Mindscape £25.53 ***

36 (25) KICK OFF 2 Anco £24.99 *****

37 (19) WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD
Kixx £7.99 *****

38 (33) EUROPEAN SUPERLEAGUE
CDS £24.99 **

39 (24) SWIV Storm £24.99 *****

40 (5) CHUCK ROCK
Core Design £25.54 *****

41 (26) MEGA TRAVELLER 1
Empire £29.99 *****

42 (33) SPEEDBALL
Mirror Image £9.99 *****

43 (42) PANZA KICK BOXING
US Gold £24.99 *

44 (46) FORGOTTEN WORLDS
Kixx £7.99 ***

45 (47) FAST FOOD Code Masters £6.99 ***

46 (28) CALIFORNIA GAMES
Kixx £7.99 **

47 (29) SUPER MONACO GRAND PRIX
US Gold £25.53 ***

48 (NE) PREDATOR The Hit Squad £7.99 **

49 (53) THE RUNNING MAN
Grandslam £7.99 **

50 (NE) THE THREE STOOGES
Mirror Image £9.99 **

51(39) VIZ Virgin £24.99 *

52 (NE) GOLD OF THE AZTECS
US Gold £29.99 ****

53 (NE) CYBERCON 3
US Gold £29.99 *****

54 (36) F19 STEALTH FIGHTER
MicroProse £29.99 ****

55 (NE) SIM CITY/ POPULOUS
Infogrames £29.99 *****

56 (43) SUPER SCRAMBLE SIMULATOR
Kixx £9.99 **

57 (45) SUPER HANG-ON
The Hit Squad £7.99 ****

58 (NE) BUDOKAN Electronic Arts £25.99 ***

59 (NE) SPIRIT OF EXCALIBUR
Virgin £29.99 **

60 (57) CLASSIC FOUR Energize £6.99 **

61(50) OPERATION WOLF
The Hit Squad £7.99 ****

62 (35) R-TYPE The Hit Squad £7.99 ***

63 (67) POWERMONGER
Electronic Arts £29.99 *****

64 (34) DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPICS
The Hit Squad £7.99 **

65 (NE) SUPERCARS II
Gremlin £19.99 ***

66 (NE) A10 TANK KILLER
Sierra On-Line £34.99 ***

67 (78) VIGILANTE Kixx £7.99 *

68 (72) SUPER GRAND PRIX
Code Masters £9.99 **

69 (NE) PREDATOR II Mirrorsoft £25.99 **

70 (NE) VIOLATOR Code Masters £7.99 ***

71 (63) SWITCHBLADE Kixx £7.99 ****

72 (44) GAUNTLET II Kixx £7.99 ****

73 (90) AXEL'S MAGIC HAMMER Kixx £9.99 **

74 (88) TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES
Image Works £24.99 *

75 (27) WONDERLAND Virgin £30.64 ***

76 (NE) ENGLAND CHAMP SPECIAL
Grand Slam £25.99

77 (30) MOONWALKER Kixx £7.99 *

78 (29) BRAT Image Works £25.99 ***

79 (56) AFTERBURNER The Hit Squad £7.99 *

80 (31) POWER UP Ocean £29.99 ****

81 (NE) STRIKE FORCE HARRIER
Mirror Image £9.99 **

82 (NE) BLUE MAX Mindscape £29.99 **

83 (NE) WAR ZONE Prism Leisure £2.99

84 (NE) WIZBALL The Hit Squad £7.99 ****

85 (58) TOP CAT Hi-Tec £6.99 **

86 (48) LAST NINJA 2 The Hit Squad £7.99 **

87 (86) HOTSHOT Kixx £7.99 ***

88 (69) 3D CONSTRUCTION KIT
Domark £49.99 ****

89 (91) TRACK SUIT MANAGER
Alternative £7.99 **

90 (NE) ESWAT
US Gold £24.99 *

91 (NE) STRIP POKER AND DATA DISK
Anco £19.99

92 (NE) CRICKET CAPTAIN
D&H Games £24.99

93 (66) THE BARD'S TALE 3
Electronic Arts £25.99 **

94 (NE) INTERCEPTOR
Classic Collection £10.99 ****

95 (82) YOGI AND THE GREED MONSTER
Hi-Tec £7.99 **

96 (79) OUT RUN Klassix £7.99 **

97 (89) PRO TENNIS TOUR 2
Ubi soft £24.99 ****

98 (73) FC MANAGER
Energize £6.99

99 (71) MOONSHINE RACERS
Millennium £29.99 **

100 (96) POWER PACK
Beau Jolly £24.99

***3D Construction Kit* – chartable?**

extremely popular over a two week period, and then everyone forgets all about it. We expect this to still be popular in a year's time. You have to remember that this is more of a utility than a game.' She pointed out that it is often being bought in stores not audited by Gallup.

Since the chart is not representing the program in a fair light, one wonders if it should be represented at all?

WHO'S WINNING?

You're probably getting real sick of hearing about how much the summer sucks for games, but when titles such as the top two are cleaning up, the argument doesn't really hold water. This month's chart is split almost exactly 50/50 between full price and budget games, with most of the cheapos languishing in the less fashionable regions at the bottom. Gallup reckons the budgeteers will be making more of an impression as the weather improves and names like Code Masters, Kixx and The Hit Squad could feature even more prominently next month.

THE AMIGA POWER CHARTS: HOW THEY'RE WORKED OUT

- The Amiga Power charts are put together for us by Gallup (the folk who do the BBC pop charts among many others) based on a continuing survey of sales in a wide cross section of shops up and down the country – both independent computer stores and large chains like WH Smith. As such they're the most comprehensive charts it's possible to bring you. Doing thing's so comprehensively takes time, though – the chart above relates to sales during the May/June period.
- There's no dividing the charts into 'Budget' and 'Full Price' sections for us – we're sure you're perfectly capable of doing that for yourselves if you want to – so the list you see here includes games at every price point. This way, you can see just how important budget sales are to the overall market – at this time of year, with few big name titles being released, very important indeed.
- Each game is rated out of five stars (five red stars for the really, really excellent ones) using the same system as in The Bottom Line, to give you some idea of how good the things that are selling really are. Games which don't get any stars aren't necessarily total rubbish – they just happen to be the ones we've never really played, so can't properly comment on. Having said that though, there has to be a reason why nobody in the office has ever found it within themselves to sit down with them, hasn't there..?

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- **SLOW MOTION MODE**
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- **POWERFUL PICTURE EDITOR**
Now you can manipulate and search for screens throughout memory. Over 50 commands to edit the picture plus unique on screen status "overlay" shows all the information you could ever need to work on screens. No other product comes close to offering such dynamic screen handling of frozen programs!!
- **MUSIC SOUND TRACKER**
With Sound Tracker you can find the complete music in programs , demos,etc. and save them to disk. Saves in format suitable for most track player programs. Works with loads of programs!!
- **AUTOFIRE MANAGER**
From the Action Replay II preference screen you can now set up autofire from 0 to 100%. Just imagine continuous fire power? Joystick 1 and 2 are set separately for that extra advantage!
- **DISKCODER**
With the new "Diskcoder" option you can now 'tag' your disks with a unique code that will prevent the disk from being loaded by anyone else. 'Tagged" disks will only reload when you enter the code. Very useful for security.
- **PREFERENCES**
Action Replay II now has screen colour preferences with menu setup. Customise your screens to suit your taste. Very simple to use.
- **DISK MONITOR**
Invaluable disk monitor - displays disk information in easy to understand format. Full modify/save options.
- **DOS COMMANDS**
Now you have a selection of DOS commands available at all times - DIR, FORMAT, COPY, DEVICE, etc.
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JUST WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE?

MATT BIELBY

Matt's been spending most of this month in a series of one day meetings or out on the road visiting game developers, leaving little time for reviewing. He has, however, found space to get his mind around a few of the simpler things we've received lately – 'It's all my brain can cope with at the moment,' he confesses. His faves are platformers and 'unusual, off-the-wall things.'

Matt's been playing: '*R-Type II*, and *Exile* from last issue.'

GARY PENN

Gary's not had much time for games this month – or anything else really. He's been too busy putting together this issue's giant cover-mounted Complete Control tips poster (in particular struggling away with every screen of *Bombuzal*). 'I bloody hate the bloody thing!' he told us, leaving little room for argument.

Gary's been playing: '*Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*.'

COLIN CAMPBELL

Colin Campbell – deputy editor and Jean-Claude Van Damme fan – has taken over True Stories and compiling the disk from this month on – tasks everybody else hated which seem ideally suited to his talents. Outside work he's been walking his new dog and falling off his 'lovely' Vespa scooter. He likes sports games, platformers and 'everything-must-die games.'

Colin's been playing: '*Manchester United Europe* and *Toki*.'

MARK RAMSHAW

Mark Ramshaw is AMIGA POWER's long-suffering production editor, though that doesn't seem to stop him spending a fair amount of time playing games. His parents run a Sunderland-based computer shop, so his games knowledge goes way back, though it's adventurey arcade things, user-friendly FRPs and ultra-violent Williams coin-ops that mainly (ahem) light his fire.

Mark's been playing: '*Llamatron* and *Monkey Island*.'

STUART CAMPBELL

Stuart, the software industry's favourite (hem hem) reviewer, started life in fanzines, in particular the rather odd 'Between Planets.' In his spare time he's taken over the weekly Gary Penn Gamesweek slot in New Computer Express. His favourite games are 'ones where you battle against the enemies, not the control system or incompetence of the programmers.' (Blimey!)

Stuart's been playing: '*R-Type II* – it's seriously excellent.'

JONATHAN DAVIES

Jonathan has been struggling away at an extremely unfriendly assortment of obscure strategy games this month – games nobody else had the time or inclination to go anywhere near. Imagine his surprise, then, when a decent, big name product (in this case *Hunter*) slipped through our Anti-Jonathan Hate Campaign net. His favourite games are 'really good 3D ones.'

Jonathan's been playing: '*Hunter*, which is really good.'

RICH PELLEY

Teenage health freak and cutsie game fan Rich Pelley disappeared off the face of the earth this month, and for ages we weren't sure where he'd gone. Had he found a new girlie? Could he be hiding out from somebody he owes money to? Or what? Then his copy arrived, and with it a message: 'I've gone Inter-railing – see you next month.' The mystery was solved!

Rich has been playing: '*Exile* (I remember the BBC version).'

PAUL LYONS

Thrilled at Future Publishing's recent acquisition of Mountain Biking UK (Britain's – ahem – leading mountain bike mag), Paul has been spending every spare moment riding around on £3000 worth of borrowed titanium-framed Marin (a very posh bike indeed). That doesn't mean Amiga Format's Assistant Editor hasn't had time to look at the odd strategy product for us.

Paul's been playing: '*Eye Of Beholder* (still), and *Atomino*.'

SEAN MASTERSON

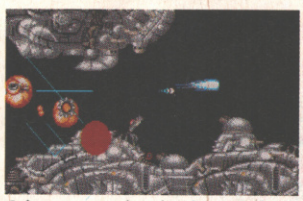
FRP fan Sean's been a bit on the ratty side this month, and we're not sure why. Up and down like a blooming yo-yo he is – sometimes jolly, sometimes snappy, but most often in that odd in-between mood where you're not quite sure what he's thinking. For safety's sake, then, we've steered well clear of him for the past few weeks, which is why we've got nothing to write (Sorry).

Sean's been playing: Dunno - none of us have seen him.

GAMES

Welcome to the AMIGA POWER game reviews, twenty five pages packed to bursting with, erm, game reviews. Summer's still with us, and the number of releases really deserving of the AMIGA POWER in-depth treatment remains fairly limited – thus we've got just five of those, starting over the page. Then, on page 72, come the rest of the full prices – some good, some bad and some simply indifferent, but all given a true AMIGA POWER once-over – with the budget and compilation coverage following on behind at page 80. Our Public Domain reviews get boosted to two pages this issue, starting on 85, and then last (but by no means etc) there's The Bottom Line – almost 300 mini reviews of every major full price Amiga release from the last year. The complete character assassination of the year's worst – and praise of its best, of course – begins on page 95. And there we have it – simply the most comprehensive, most flexible, most comprehensible and downright sexiest games review system ever devised. (Unless you think different of course, in which case you really should be writing in and telling us why).

***Hunter* – pushing the boundaries of 3D graphics even further.**



Coin-op conversions just keep getting better. *R-Type II* shows the way.

IN A NUTSHELL: THE AMIGA POWER SCORING SYSTEM (AND HOW IT WORKS)

Our reviewing 'philosophy' (for want of a better word) is fairly simple and self explanatory. Here's a brief breakdown on how it works:

1) We never forget you're being asked to fork out £25 or more for a full price game – it's a lot of money, and we believe a product has to be really good to be worth it. Half baked ideas, cynical tie-ins and plain sloppiness just don't cut it, which is why you'll find our reviews quite possibly the toughest around. Compare the marks we give out to those of just about any other magazine – we think you'll find our wider spread of opinion tells you a lot more about the games.

2) We believe a rating system should be simple, logical and understandable – to the extent that a sentence like this is one, which is setting out to try and explain it, should prove totally redundant. So we'll stop right here.

3) We'll nearly always broadly agree about whether a game is good or bad, but sometimes – just sometimes – opinions differ quite strongly. That's when we run an 'On the other hand...' box, allowing a second reviewer to voice his or her (not that we have any girlie reviewers as yet) opinions as appropriate.

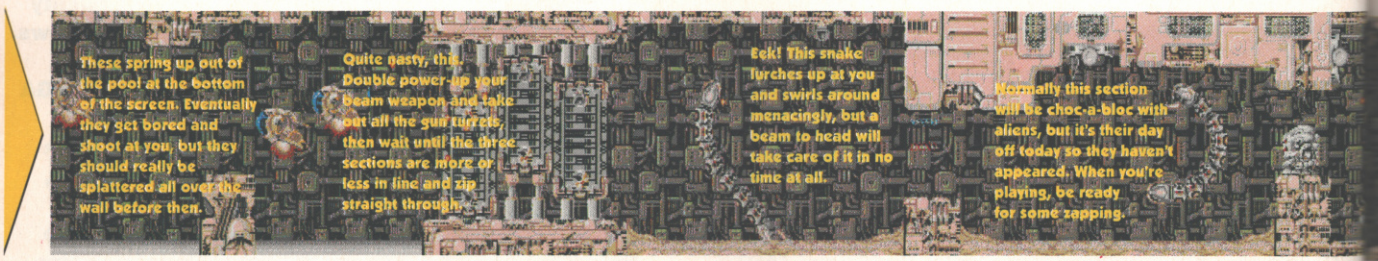
4) Predictable we know, but there simply isn't a point number four.

After the perfection of last month's *Toki*, Activision make their bid for the title of

R-TYPE II

LEVEL ONE

The first level of *R-Type II* isn't too taxing. Beware level two though!

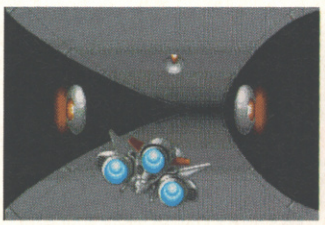


Game: R-Type II
Publisher: Activision
Price: £25.99
Author: Arc Developments
Release: Late August / Early September

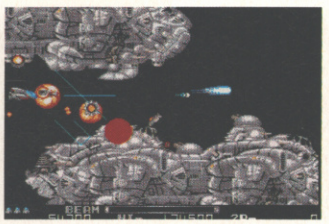
There was a bit of a scare when Activision UK packed their bags recently and disappeared into the realms of history – yes, it was sad to see such a famous and long established name go down, but more to the point what would happen to the various projects they'd commissioned? For a while it looked like many eagerly awaited games wouldn't see the light of day at all, but slowly they started to crop up with various other publishers – *Exile* at Audiogenic, the upcoming *Realms* and *3D Snooker* at Virgin – and the Activision name itself resurfaced under the protective wing of Paris-based The Disk Company.

And now the first releases from the new Activision are starting to come out – *Beast Busters* (see elsewhere this issue) and this one, *R-Type II*. It'll be coming your way in the late summer, and if I were you I'd start saving my pennies up right now, because this is simply the best arcade game I've seen on the Amiga in my life. Not only that, it's just about the best one I ever expect to see, because I can't imagine how a coin-op could be converted better than this. But back to the start.

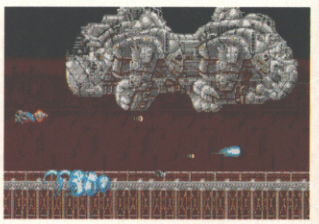
R-Type II was the arcade sequel to one of the most popular scrolling shoot-'em-ups in the history of video-gaming, and on first appearance was the subject of some disappointment. The look and feel of the game was very much that of the original with a few largely cosmetic tweaks – it seemed more like extra levels to the first game than anything else – but on playing it it became clear that this was a superb game in itself. It was nonetheless only a minor success, and you won't see too many in arcades these days.



The R-9 speeds through a tunnel on its way to level one. This is only an intro sequence. Don't worry about shooting.



At the end of level three, you have to take out motherships. Space is at a premium, so be ready for some spot on manoeuvering.



Here's one of the third-level motherships in full. It's not quite as big as the original one, but it's every bit as mean.

ARC WELDING AND MAKING HIT CONVERSIONS

Fusing together all the disparate elements that go to make up a successful coin-op conversion isn't a job for faint hearts. Programmers Arc Developments have a fairly low-profile history in the Amiga games world (they certainly aren't one of the big names like the Bitmaps or Bullfrog or Core or even Probe), despite a record which already includes some pretty impressive arcade ports (*Forgotten Worlds*, *Crack Down* and *Dragon Breed*, to name three). Nonetheless, Activision handed them this tough job, so I had a word with Paul Walker (graphics and general direction) about how they coped with it.

AP: So, just how did you go about tackling the conversion? Did you have any help from Irem (the coin-op people) at all?
AD: What we got from Irem was laser-printed sheets of all the game's backdrops and single sprites of every character. This meant that we had to do all the character animations for ourselves (we'd have one basic sprite to work from, but it might have 64 further frames of animation and we'd know nothing about them). We also had a coin-op from which we taped the tunes and FX (via a built-in sound test facility), and then sent it to Martin (Walker, sound and music) to turn into Amiga sounds.

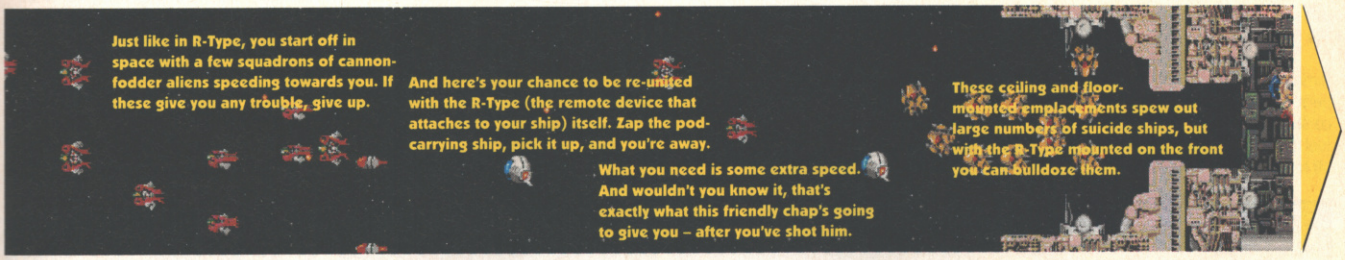
AP: Did you fit everything in? We haven't spotted anything much missing – it must have been a tight squeeze.
AD: You haven't and you won't! Absolutely everything from the arcade machine is in there, we didn't skip a single bit. Part of the reason the job took us so long (8 months just for the Amiga version) was that we kept thinking about cheating on bits, missing out certain parallax sections and so on, but then we'd come up with a way of doing it properly and we'd have to scrap whole sections of code and start over again.

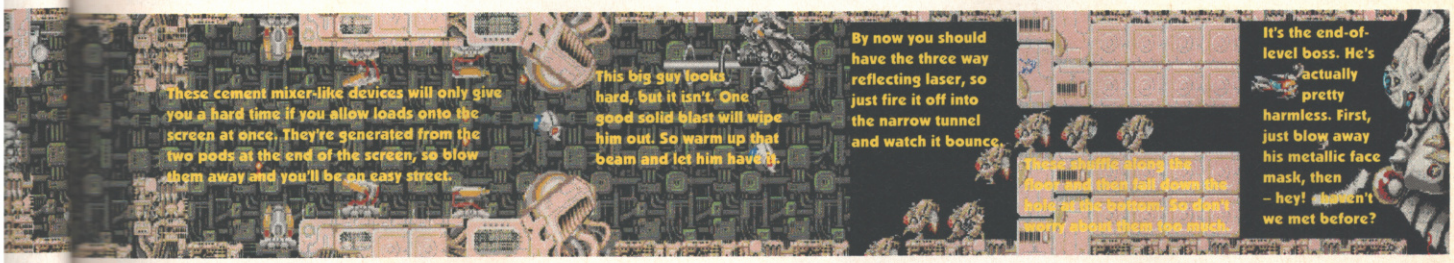
AP: Did you make any changes? (For example, Ocean France actually improved on the parallax scrolling of the arcade version of *Toki* in their Amiga conversion).
AD: No. We took our job as being to replicate the coin-op as perfectly as we could, and that's what we've done.

AP: Is there anything about the finished article that you're unhappy with?
AD: Honestly, no.

AP: And do you think this is the best arcade-to-Amiga translation there's ever been?
AD: Well, yes and no. I think our earlier conversion of *Crack Down* for US Gold was just as good, but it didn't get a very good reception because of complaints people made about the actual arcade game. The original might have been flawed, but our conversion of it was absolutely perfect, and the same goes for *R-Type II*. I don't think you'll ever find a copy more true to an original coin-op than either of those two – they just can't be bettered.

'best arcade conversion', with the most single-minded blast-'em-up of them all.





What could be more fortunate, then, than the news that Activision were producing an Amiga version for you to play in the comfort of your own home? Well, plenty of things if it turned out like so many coin-op conversions – a half-hearted attempt at a quick cash-in from the legions of arcade devotees who'll buy the name first and worry about the quality of the game later. It hasn't of course, but why? So just what is it that's so damn good about this one?

Ooh, pretty much everything, really. This might sound silly but I can't think of a single thing that's wrong with *R-Type II*, at least not if you take it for what it is, a coin-op conversion.

'I can't think of a single thing that's wrong with *R-Type II*'

(Rather than moaning, say, about a lack of depth or new ideas or any of that old guff. And anyway, *Rainbow Islands* was a coin-op conversion, and it's the best Amiga game ever – official – so there just isn't a problem there.) Purely on those terms, you'd have to give it 100% because as far as I can see it's flawless.

Of course, since this is AMIGA POWER (and also seeing as this is the real world), it's not going to get 100%, so let's have a go at seeing where it does lose some marks.

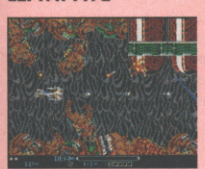
NIT PICKING AND HAIR SPLITTING

Okay, well first off there's the difficulty. *R-Type II* is undeniably a tough old bast of a game, and it's a level of toughness that may well deter 50% of Amiga game players straight away. Level one isn't too bad, but to get very far through level two you're going to have to be very good, very persistent, and very lucky, all at the same time. Personally I think the difficulty is judged just right (I'm sick of games that you can finish in a →

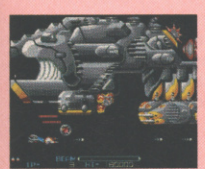
R-TYPE MEETS R-TYPE II – THOSE GAME SIMILARITIES IN FULL

What's immediately obvious about *R-Type II* is that nearly all the levels are basically variations on the themes of the ones in the original *R-Type*. Not too sure what we're on about? Then take a look below and you'll see exactly what we mean...

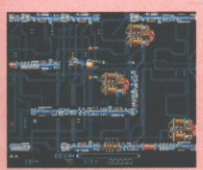
LEFT: *R-TYPE* **RIGHT: *R-TYPE II***



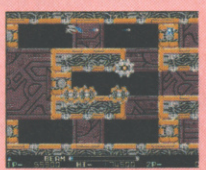
Level two is probably the least similar, but does feature a long tunnel with bad guys coming at you strongly from the top and bottom walls, not unlike *R-Type*'s second level.



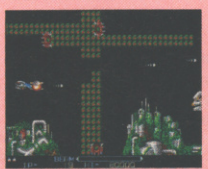
Whereas level three is the most strongly reminiscent of the original, containing dirty great mother ships which you have to fly around and blow bits off, corresponding to same level in the first game.



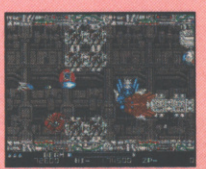
R-Type II's fourth level will strike a chord in anyone familiar with level six of *R-Type*. The big mazes with moving blocks and narrow manoeuvering spaces make timing of the essence in both games.



LEFT: *R-TYPE* **RIGHT: *R-TYPE II***

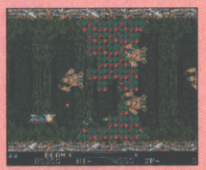


We get back into sequence now, with the fifth level of *R-Type II* and the fourth level of *R-Type* also tying broadly together. Monster aliens shoot across the screen, leaving obstacles behind.



Wait a minute, what's happened to *R-Type* level 5? Reach the final level of *R-Type II* and you'll find it, complete with those armoured snakes that shatter into half-a-dozen pieces when you hit them.

A little further into the sixth level, though, and you may begin to think you're back in the original's level five, with that big wall built of little blocks for you to cut a swathe through.



day, or ones that give you infinite or ridiculously high numbers of credits, so that completing it is a test of endurance rather than skill), but some people won't like it, so a couple of marks off there.

Next comes the equally undeniable familiarity with the first *R-Type*. Again I personally like it, I think it gives a feel of continuity, but there are people who will feel it's simply unimaginative. One mark off for that.

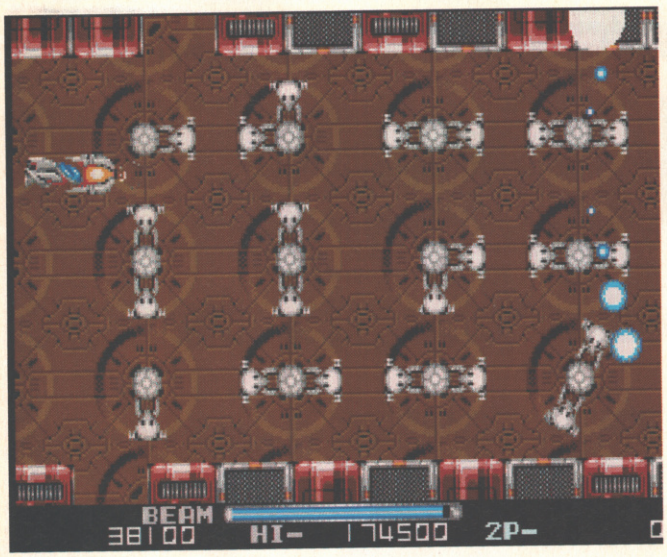
'This is simply the best arcade game I've seen on the Amiga in my life'

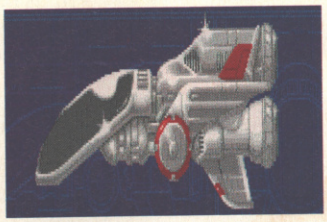
There's also the fact that – close as it is – it isn't an exact *physical* representation of arcade *R-Type II*. The screen isn't quite as deep, limiting the play area (most noticeable on level three) and coupled with the fact that everything's slightly slower it actually makes certain sections of the game noticeably harder to complete. Two marks off there.

More worryingly, there seem to be a couple of minor bugs. When playing the game with a hard drive plugged in, some of the aliens can be caught right in the middle of a full-force explosion, yet when the dust clears they're still alive. This caused a bit of a problem once with the end-of-level two boss, and (although it happened only once) it would still be incredibly annoying if it happened to you, especially considering what a bitch level two is to get through anyway. On the very rare occasions when it does crops up, this is a serious flaw, so five marks down for that .

Lastly, there's, um... Well, there's bound to be something I haven't thought of yet, so let's take a couple of extra percent off just to be on the safe side. And where does all that leave us? It looks to me like it leaves us at the bottom of the review... •

STUART CAMPBELL





And here's the R-9 itself, looking polished-up and ready for battle.

The fifth end-of-level boss is protected by this incredibly sneaky and devious set-up. When you shoot the girders they rotate around and put a whole new complexion on your movement space. Easy on the fire button!

UPPERS Perfect conversion of a game that was pretty damn fab in the first place, and one of a fairly rare breed, a shoot-'em-up with real lastability.

DOWNERS Very minor bug problem, and for some people the overall feeling of déjà vu.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Magnificent effort from Activision and Arc, that puts other horizontally-scrolling blasters (and most other arcade games) well and truly in the shade.

88 PERCENT

R-TYPE AND R-TYPE II – THOSE GAME DIFFERENCES IN FULL

There's no denying it, *R-Type II* is a very similar game to its predecessor, but – hey! – it's not a crime to look like *R-Type*, is it? The question is, is *R-TII* just a lazy rehash of the first game (now available for £7.99 from The Hit Squad, bargain fans), or does it add and improve on it to the extent that it's worthy of consideration on its own merits? To find out, we ran the two games on a couple of Amigas side-by-side and put a series of comparisons into operation.

NUMBER OF LEVELS
R-Type - 8 R-Type II - 6
So the original wins out on sheer quantity, and indeed nearly all the levels in *R-Type II* are based to a greater or lesser extent on levels from *R-Type*. All the same, the sequel packs more action into its smaller space, there's barely an inch of scenery that isn't bristling with offensive enemy weaponry.

AUTHENTICITY
R-Type - 5 R-Type II - 10
The original game made a few concessions when it was ported across to the 16-bits – as well as losing the arcade's lovely parallax backdrops, several of the aliens were significantly less formidable than their coin-op counterparts (particularly on level 6), and the programmers fiddled around a bit with some of the movement patterns (particularly on level 3). *R-Type II*, by comparison, is simply a flawless conversion. As far as I know there isn't a single thing missing from it, right down to the attract sequence.

WEAPONRY
R-Type - 8 R-Type II - 9
The first *R-Type* had one of the most impressive arrays of bolt-on armaments ever seen in an arcade game, and the sequel doesn't mess around too much with the winning formula. The only additions are a couple of different types of missiles, and an extra double-powered-up beam weapon, but the original system was so good (a weapon for every occasion, and sometimes having the right device – which might have been next to useless two screens earlier – could make all the difference between a glorious triumph and a horrible disaster) that to muck about with too much new stuff would have simply detracted from the classic simplicity and flexibility of what was already there.

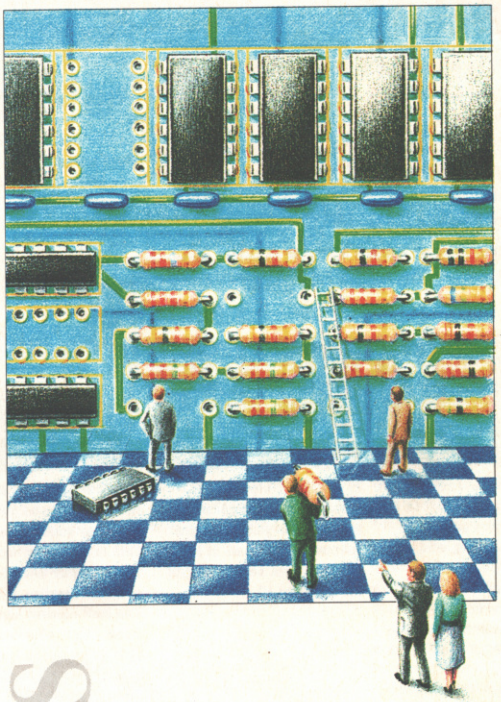
CHALLENGE
R-Type - 8 R-Type II - 10
This mark refers not just to how hard the games are, but to how things are made difficult for you (ie is successfully playing the game totally a function of skill, or is there a significant degree of luck involved?). *R-Type* does pretty well here, it's only real drawback being that if you lost your power-ups at certain stages of the game, you really didn't stand a snowball's chance of progressing any further armed only with your bog-standard laser. In *R-Type II*, though, the game is excruciatingly tough without ever making you feel that you've been cheated. Restart points after losing a life are nearly always situated very close to power-up opportunities, and if you're good enough you should never be hopelessly stuck. The level of challenge is just about the best-judged and most compulsive I've ever come across.

AESTHETICS
R-Type - 5 R-Type II - 10
As previously mentioned, *R-Type* sacrificed the backdrops in a quest for speed, but in doing so lost a lot of the feel of the coin-op. Also, sound was a choice between music and effects, which is always a disadvantage. *R-Type II*, on the other hand, manages to pull both off simultaneously, and also holds onto the background graphics for a truly realistic arcade experience.

TRAIN COUNT
R-Type - 0 R-Type II - 0
Neither game has any trains in it whatsoever.

So, adding up those marks in time-honoured fashion, we find the scores coming out at:
R-Type - 34 R-Type II - 45
Or, if you prefer, 68% against 90%, which is in anyone's book a pretty damn significant improvement. *R-Type II* isn't just some extra levels tacked onto the first game, it's a monster arcade blasterama in a league all by itself.

Amiga Repairs



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A FRAME WITH TOM

Most people will have a much better time playing their pals, but there are four computer opponents to practice on. Jimmy (as in Whirlwind White) is one of the hardest, and it's hardly worth taking him on until you've got this game sewn up. Tom is the monkey of the crew, but even he's quite a nifty ball player.

Tom breaks off and nudges the pack aside. The computer camera has swooped over the pack in order to show how it has been disturbed, although you can pick just about any angle you fancy.

Behind and above view of the early situation. Looks like I'll have to clip the pack, and play safe. Plenty of top and a touch of right is required (by clicking on the cue-ball control icons), and lashings of pace.

Oh dear, I've got mixed up in the pack, and allowed Tom to run amok among those reds. Like watching snooker on TV, this is not as easy as it looks. If you can make breaks of about ten within the first hour of play you're doing well.

Tom has edged the red into the top right pocket, and is moving onto the low-rent colours. He's using the bar along the top icon, but I prefer the other option of icons bunched up at the side.

The white line indicates the travel path of the MIDDLE of the ball, but the edges could clip that red, and cost a four point penalty. It's always wise to look at the situation from as many angles as possible. This also helps to plan for the next shot.

By holding onto the left mouse button when taking the shot the game camera follows the cueball. It looks like I'm quite safe with that brown after all.

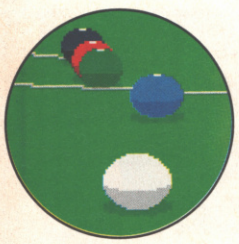
With only one red on the table it's time to get nasty, and play some snookers. This can be enormous fun against your 'friends' who'll soon be howling with rage. Cue ball control has always been pretty dismal in computer snooker. Here it's exactly as you would expect – bloody difficult.

Tom has left the white on the cushion (I'm playing the yellow). The cueball control icon will only let you play the top of the ball so whack on loads of chalk, and hit it firmly (but not too hard, or it'll be a miscue).

I'm still chasing the blasted yellow, and now I've been (unluckily) snookered. By clicking on the white line icon, and pressing the right hand mouse button, you can see the projected path of a ball after it has bounced. However, this won't show you the effects of giving the ball side spin.

I'm being beaten soundly, so it's time to get horrible. The general idea here is to clip the yellow into that pack of colours, and leave the white at the bottom of the table.

From the creator of *IK+* comes a simply astounding 3D snooker game. Could this



JIMMY WHI WHIRLWIND S

Game: Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker
Publisher: Virgin
Price: £24.99
Author: Archer Maclean
Release: September

At four o'clock in the morning, having played ten frames (and about 12 solid hours worth) of this game against a mate of mine I finally came to the conclusion that this was by far the most impressive sports simulation I had ever seen. In fact, it's something that had been pretty obvious from the word go – I'd just refused to allow myself to really believe it up 'till then, scared that I'd turn out to be wrong.

Snooker, eh? We've all enjoyed a few frames of snooker in the past, I'll bet, and we've all cabbaged in front of the telly watching some gangly youth make millions from potting balls, so we all know pretty what to expect from a snooker simulation. There've been plenty of them, on just about any machine you could mention, over the years too – the trouble is, we've never seen anything yet which even approached adequacy.

Until now that is. It really is hard to see how this could get much better. For snooker fans, it's about as close as you'll ever get to actually owning a 12 foot table of lead and baize and having it installed in your living room.

That's not all it can do though – *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker* has many more tricks up its sleeve too, though we'll get to them in a moment.

But first, the real acid test of a snooker game – ball movement. Often you'll see computer pool, billiards and snooker games in which balls seem to fly around at silly speeds before eventually slowing down in uncomfortable jutters. Here the balls slow down languidly, and naturally. Unlike a few early computer snooker attempts, they don't quiver as they sit there without being touched either.

View the table any way you please, but putting balls in pockets is no breeze.

The control method is equally impressive with a subtlety of angle calculation and strike that is impossible to fault. You could play this for ever and never be able to claim that the program was to blame for a dodgy shot.

Players work from a set of on-screen icons, or they can use the keyboard. Lining up a shot is a simple matter of hitting the cueball icon (and therefore being transported to behind the white), and swinging the cue around in order to line up. Here, you can use the swing icon, or the arrow keys on your machine. Exactitude is achieved with the help of a white guiding line indicating the ball's expected path.

Then you can control the speed of cue action (to a remarkably fine degree), before adding side spin, top or stun. Then just press the central ball icon, and watch the results of your calculations.

So what's new? Well, yes, these controls are to be found in just about any snooker game you could care to mention, but the difference here is that this time it's actually worth taking your time over shots, with the confidence that your actions will result in a something which, as far as the laws of physics go, is without fault.

That's not all there is to it though, as we touched upon before – the game actually contains a whole host of other features too complex to go into here (and anyway, I don't want to spoil your fun – half the joy is in finding out just what you can do with this baby). Fiddling around with the Trick Shot screen is especially enlightening – you can (at least try) to get away with all manner of manoeuvres.

Another wildly impressive feature is the game-view option, which allows you to zoom around the table at will. You can do this simply by moving the mouse about on screen, or by using the icons, or even the keyboard. Movement is, just possibly, the fastest thing yet seen in a 3D Amiga game – especially remarkable when you consider just how much hardcore number-crunching is going on.

This is the standard shooting screen style. The line indicates the projected path of the middle of the cueball, so tight angles and clips are a matter of judgement. This middle shot is simplicity itself, but following through is always a danger...

Hmmm, I've muddled through, and luckily, the brown is hovering over an inviting pocket. If you want to win with long shots you have to take your time. I got cocky with this one and missed completely.

Lining up another ambitious shot, this pot could pave the way to a tasty break...

It's worth getting a close up of the ball just to check on your angles. Those funny faces appear randomly.

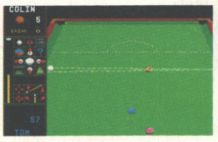
Tom is going to cut that blue into the right hand pocket. That shot would cause you problems because you can't see the pocket while you're lining up the shot. A lot of swapping between view screens is required.

Slight angle shots are real nasty, mostly because they look relatively simple. At first even good snooker players will find their angles all over the place, but after a few frames you get used to the table...

Oh fiddlesticks (or something). That so-called snooker attempt has set up the computer opponent for an easy pot. This is turning into a bit of a nightmare.

Now he's played onto the green

And the brown.



But he's blown it. Here's my chance to play a skilled double into the middle pocket (otherwise known as a hit and hope shot).

Adjusting the view height can give you a good idea of how best to strike tricky balls.

There must have been something wrong with my cue! Tom's sixty points ahead and on the black. I've been well and truly stuffed. At the end of the game there's a roar from the crowd and applause a-plenty. It's nice when you've beaten a friend, but extremely irritating when he has whipped you.

be the best sports sim ever? You betcha!

TE'S SNOOKER

ARCHER MACLEAN SEEMS PRETTY PLEASED...

And who can blame him? We asked the man behind *Whirlwind Snooker* (and, incidentally, the excellent *IK+* amongst others) how he put the game together:

'It took me about two and a half years, on and off. The story behind it is pretty weird. When I first bought an Atari back in 1981 or so I was really impressed after playing this space shoot-'em-up game. That night I had a vivid dream about flying around a snooker table. I think it was a mixture of the excitement of this new computer and there being a lot of snooker on the telly at the time.

'Anyway, the way the game is now so much like the dream, it's uncanny. I always tell that story. Ha ha.'

How did you manage to get the ball movement to be so accurate?

'It was a nightmare. The mathematics involved in getting balls to hit each other, with angles and so on taken into account, are immense. I had to talk to friends who are more mathematically minded than myself. That's such a small part of the game, and it took me two and a half months to perfect, but it was worth it. If you took a shot on a snooker table, and then the exact same shot on this game, the balls would react in exactly the same way.'

What pleases you especially about the game?

'The speed of it. I don't think there is another game that moves so fast. Also, you'll find there's so much you can do the more you play. Swerving the ball, for instance, is possible although not easy.'

So what's next on the agenda?

'I'm going to transfer this to the PC first, which will be a bit of a headache. And I'm also working on a pool version for the Amiga. That should include a number of different versions of the game – American, English and all sorts. With luck it'll be something really special.'

No, but the good sides of this are so good that it seems a bit finickity to start going on about the faults. But, what the hell – this is a review after all. For a start, the sound quality isn't quite there. Balls dropping into the pockets, for instance, sound far too clanky to be realistic.

I also had a real problem with the lack of statistics. If you're going to transfer a game to computer you might just as well make use of the machine. It would have been splendid to see, say, a 'percentage-of-shots-potted' or average 'get-out-of-a-snooker' rate or, well, anything really. The stats they've actually provided are really quite inadequate.

There, that did sound finicky, didn't it? To be honest, I don't really want to knock the game at all. For having a great knock-about on at home this can hardly be beaten. Not only is it a work of admirable craftsmanship from programmer Maclean, it's also one of those games that makes the Amiga worth buying in its own right. A gem. • ***COLIN CAMPBELL***

UPPERS Possibly the most remarkable piece of games programming I've ever seen. Smooth, confident and, above all, lots and lots (and lots) of fun.

DOWNERS Obviously, a waste of time if you hate snooker. Could have been enhanced with the addition of some engrossing statistics.

THE BOTTOM LINE

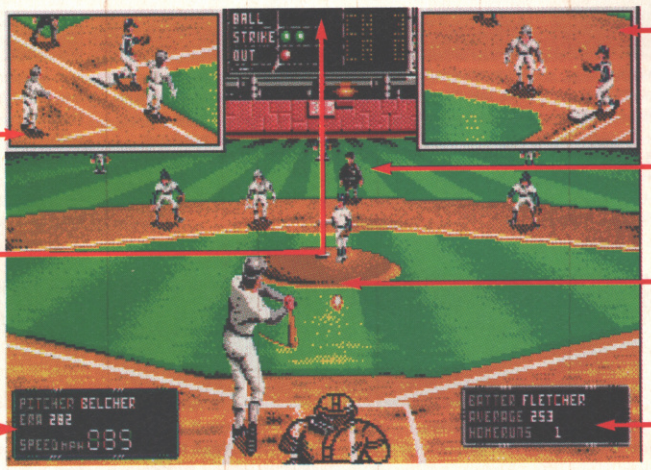
An essential purchase for anyone who enjoys snooker – or simply good games. In pounds per entertainment hour, it can't be beaten. Not to be missed.

90 PERCENT

PITCHING/BATTING

Spearheading a bit of a revival in computer sports, Domark's

Going for that elusive home run in *RBI Two Baseball*.



Whenever a batman reaches a base, a little screen pops up, showing his location. Here we see a runner getting ready to go for home.

This minature representation of the scoreboard not only gives scores but also provides valuable information including the number of strikes, balls and men out. (The animated displays are thankfully not present).

In addition to the statistics of the pitcher, this handy little information box also lets you know the velocity of the approaching ball.

And this cute little box shows the runner currently kicking the sand at first base. He's just itching to make a run for it.

The guy in black is the umpire. Yeah, like the computer is really going to let me cheat. (Still, I guess it's nice to know he's there).

When batting, wait until the ball reaches this point before swinging the club. With a bit of practice (and a lot of luck) you'll be hitting home runs in no time (hem hem).

This is the current batsman. He's not what you'd call brilliant, with only one home run to his credit.

RBI TWO

Game: RBI Two Baseball
Publisher: Tengen/Domark
Price: £29.99
Author: The Kremlin
Release: Out now

Once upon a time, Atari (or Tengen as they like to be known these days) produced a baseball game exclusively for the Nintendo console, and as is the wont of software people, they subsequently got round to producing a sequel. Now their friends at Domark have produced a version of said sequel for the Amiga. Thus we have something a little strange – a sequel without a predecessor (on this format anyway). Mind you, considering the limited scope of baseball, I don't expect we've missed out on much – I mean, just how different could they have been?

Once upon a time (part two), I loathed sports at school, but at least when the summer came round, and the old baseball equipment was dragged out it, I could savour a welcome respite from football and bloody rugby. Ah, happy days.

But enough of this – you want to know about the game. It's not exactly simple, but I'll give it my best shot...

BASEBALL IN THE MAJOR LEAGUE

Leafing through the bits and pieces bunged into the *RBI Two* box, the first thing to hit me was the amount of background stuff included. Not only is there a baseball cap (though it did actually look more like a cycling cap, but it's cool anyway) to get you in the mood, but the manual goes so far as to give fourteen pages of player statistics (that's the actual player rosters on twenty eight teams!) and even includes a lowdown on what task each guy (the batter, the pitcher, the baseman etc) actually performs in the favourite sport of our American friends. Very handy for heathens like me.

These aren't dodgy trinkets designed to disguise a dismal game – they help the game shine even more. From the 'Back To The Future' inspired theme music and the presenter, with his cheesy grin fixed for the camera, to the in-game sequences with gruff speech samples, *RBI Two Baseball* oozes class. The game offers the usual one player against computer option, but it really comes into its own when there are two players, making it much more of a social affair.

The standard 3D view from behind the catcher is used for the main pitching/batting sequence (with some pretty nifty animation), but once the ball is actually whacked, the view changes to an aerial one, panning over the pitch to follow its progress.

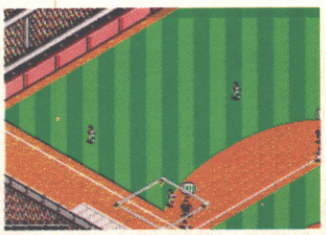
'Okay, I admit it – it's very good.'

Should this leave the main diamond pitch thing (or whatever the technical term is) out of view, the game helpfully super-imposes a little scanner which charts the progress of the runners as they head for that home run. Although the characters are small in this view, they're still move in a surprisingly fluid manner, sliding into home base and such like.

For practically every occurrence (home runs, being caught out, reaching a base safely, and so on), there's a cute scoreboard display, just to give that stadium feel. Thankfully these can be skipped by a swift press of the fire button (handy after you've witnessed them for the zillionth time) or turned off completely (much more preferable).

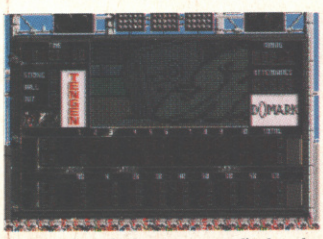
In play, the success or failure of *RBI Two Baseball* kind of hangs on the various control systems used (as indeed most of these team control simulations do). Batting is simply a matter of moving the guy, then pressing the fire button when the ball is thrown. This leaves it all down to timing, which works quite effectively (after about fifteen minutes practice). Still, the chance of some extra directional control would have been nice, and the hit rate is unrealistically low (for human players anyway). Pitching is a little more interactive, allowing for curve balls, fast balls, slow balls, and combination pitches. Then there's the fielding and running (which is where I really begin to have problems) but more of that in a minute. All fielders run corresponding to joystick movement, so the trick is to work out just which fielder you should be directing. If it turns out that he's not going to reach the ball in time, then chances are you've moved any other fielders several miles away. So, until a kind of latent instinct surfaces, actually getting hold of the ball in a reasonable amount of time proves a maddeningly tricky task.

Running between bases is another fairly automated affair (rather inevitably really). Other than getting the chance to force runners back to the previous base, or onwards to the next, things pretty much take care of themselves.



Oh no. Another computer batsman knocks it for miles. It's all going horribly wrong.

A 'quiet' game. First strike , two batters out, and no home runs for either team.

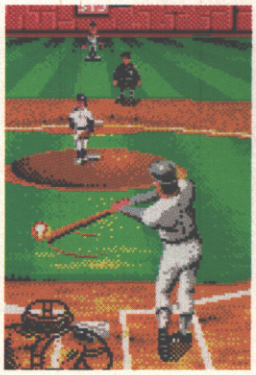


The scoreboard. The scores are displayed at the bottom, while above titbits such as stadium attendance are shown.

The fielder throws the ball back to first base, but the batsman manages to slide to safety just in time. Edge of the seat stuff.

baseball sim hits hard and almost makes it a home run.

It's a hit! As the ball goes onwards and upwards, the fielders stand around helplessly, while the batsman and runners go hell for leather.



Contact! Ball hits wood with a satisfying thud. Hey, maybe this baseball lark isn't really so hard after all!

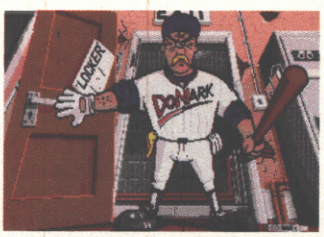
ON THE OTHER HAND... Mark's correct in saying that *RBI Two* is a game for baseball fans, but there are enough of us to make this a huge hit, and consequently I would have marked it some five to 10 percent higher. I too found the controls tricky to begin with, but mastering them is half the fun. Even then, *RBI Two* is one hell of a challenge, and it's teeming with those little extras which make you want to continue playing into the small hours. The only downside I can see is the excessive subtlety of control with the batsman, which takes some practice, and not a few zero score innings. Still, after digging deep for £30, you don't want to be lord and master of every North American baseball team overnight. I would urge all with a penchant for Centrefield glory to check this out. Plus, it's especially good as a two player game...

– Colin Campbell

BASEBALL

'It has that baseball 'feel' to it, but as a game in itself it just didn't quite click with me.'

Say cheese! Options abound in *RBI Two Baseball*.



Oops. This guy doesn't seem to pleased that I forfeited the game.

LET'S CALL A TIME OUT, BOYS

Time in fact for some gripes, the biggest of which has to be the lack of intuitiveness in the control system, particularly the fielding. Working out where the bleedin' ball is going to land is bad enough, but it's once you've actually got the thing in your mitts and try passing it to a base that the real nightmare begins. Frustrating? The concept of playing baseball with the disk was very tempting for a few fleeting moments. This may be down to personal taste, but a choice between this and a more normal (to my mind anyway) point-in-the-general-direction-of-the-base and throw system would have been a boon.

My second gripe concerns the actual game time (though I admit defeat on finding a better alternative which adheres to the proper rules). With each game lasting a marathon nine innings each, and an even more daunting seven games per series, it would probably be less exhausting and time consuming to find a field and play the damn game for real. Seasons come and go, but the series still goes on (yeah, I'm exaggerating just a little bit). Now to me, these gripes seem fairly important, and they've coloured my overall opinion of the game somewhat, but I'll be the first to admit that they are things which aren't simply defined in terms of good or bad, but are perhaps more down to the tastes of the individual.

PITCHED AT THE SPORTS FAN

Much as I like the idea of playing out sports on a computer, there seem to be precious few which not only capture the flavour and underlying concepts behind a sport, but which are also very playable. Sure, *RBI Two* is slick, and it has that baseball 'feel' to it, but as a game in itself it just didn't quite click with me, particularly in one player mode. That's not to say I didn't enjoy it. And that's not to say that it doesn't really excel in some areas. But it comes across as more of one of those luxury games (you know, the ones you ask your Granny for at Christmas) than one on which you'd be ecstatic about forking out £29.99. I freely admit that it could well down to me rather than *RBI Two* (I know several people who think that it achieves what it sets out to do perfectly), but for £29.99 I expect to get a game which will not only be fun to play for an hour or two, but one which I'll come back to for weeks, maybe months to come. One which I'll run around telling my friends about. You know the kind I mean.

It's good. Okay I admit it – it's very good. But it could never be mistaken for a classic. Me, I think I'll find myself a nice shoot-'em-up to while away those hot summer nights. • ***MARK RAMSHAW***

WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN – LIGHTEN UP

Let's take a closer look at some of those scoreboard sequences. Cute, slick but just that little bit repetitive, at least they can be skipped or disabled completely when you get bored. It's just as well.

Yippee! Hurrah! A home run.

The sad little ball means all out.

Foul (or 'fowl') ball (yes, it's that corny).

UPPERS A nicely balanced learning curve, near perfect presentation, and fairly successful interpretation of the mechanics of baseball make *RBI Two Baseball* a winner.

DOWNERS The controls (the heart of any sports simulation) just aren't intuitive enough. And that's what lets the side down (for me anyway). I'm also slightly dubious about the longevity of the game.

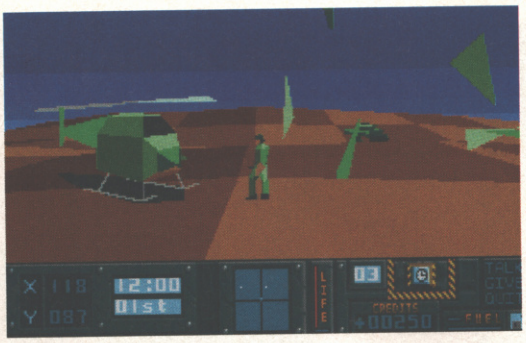
THE BOTTOM LINE

Only you know if this is your particular thang. If you need something nicely frivolous to play between multi-disk epics, then *RBI Two* fits the bill nicely.

78 PERCENT

Game: Hunter
Publisher: Activision
Price: £25.99
Authors: Paul Holmes, Martin Walker (sound)
Release: September

Somebody seems to have left this nice, shiny helicopter all alone. I better take care of it.



Hurrah! Another enemy installation bites the dust. Back to the copter for another spot of island-hopping.

HUNTER

The excellent titles just keep on coming from the resurrected Activision, this time

I've always kept myself to myself. Hardly any chums at school (no-one seemed particularly interested in my collection of washing machine bearings 1955-75) and my best friend's a gerbil. They even abolished telephone chatlines shortly after I started ringing them up. That made me an ideal candidate to join the secret service. I'd be able to sneak behind enemy lines completely unchallenged, and I wouldn't be missed at home for months on end. My first mission was a bit of a failure, though. The beautiful blonde spy I was supposed to be seducing didn't take too kindly to meeting Conan (my gerbil, who'd gone along for the ride) and did a runner. They didn't ask me back.

'There's masses to do and heaps of things to discover'

HE'S A MAN WITH A MISSION

Hunter gives you the chance to slip into the shoes of a man with a mission. And that mission is to make life as tough as possible for the enemy who, for unspecified reasons, have taken control of most of the map.

A quick perusal of the screen shots will reveal that the chap in question (he's the one in green) is a blocky, 3D sort of character. As well as walking about he can also swim, although his talents as an all-round, secret agent sort of guy aren't realised until he comes across some 'wheels' (or, indeed, 'rotors') (or a 'hull'). The place is littered with cars, lorries, tanks, boats, helicopters and all sorts of other forms of transport, all of which he's perfectly capable of driving. Handy, that, when you consider the distances

THINGS TO DO

Once you've explored *Hunter*'s possibilities a little, and found out what's what, it's time to start earning your keep. There are three broad categories of job to be done, each with its own map:

1. Missions

You're given an objective and a deadline. You've got to reach the objective, take it out and make it back to base within the allotted time. You're then given a new target, slightly harder to reach, and a new deadline, slightly tighter. Off you go again – with the clock still running from last time! It's like an episode of Treasure Hunt, only without Annabel Croft (more's the pity).

The question on every gameplayer's lips is, of course, can you blow up your own headquarters? And the answer? Indeed you can, but it takes loads of firepower. Several carefully-aimed bazooka shells would do the trick.

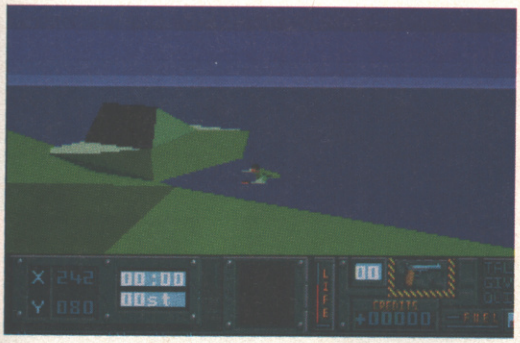
2. Action

Pretty much the same sort of thing, only you're given a long list of targets, scattered around the map, and a couple of hours to wipe them all out. You'll need to get a route planned, and it might be worth playing a quick practice game beforehand to work out where all the fuel dumps are hidden and the vehicles parked.

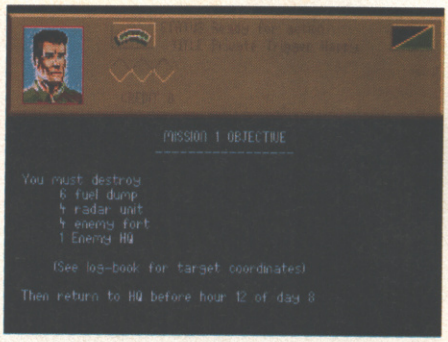
Entering buildings is likely to turn up a range of useful bits and pieces – equipment, vehicles and even the occasional civilian who might well be able to impart a useful titbit of information.

3. Hunter

This is the game proper, and you've got a single objective: 'Bring back one general's head.' That presumably means 'Kill the chief baddie' and could also be taken to include 'Oh, and blow up as many baddies as you can while you're at it.' So off you go on a sort of adventure-style mission, collecting clues and trying to track down the general.



It's about this time of day, that I like to go for a nice, refreshing swim. (It isn't easy being a one-man army).



Today's shopping list: six fuel dumps, four radars, four forts and one HQ to go (up in smoke).

Left: Oh look, a helicopter. Let's dump those wheels and take to the skies.

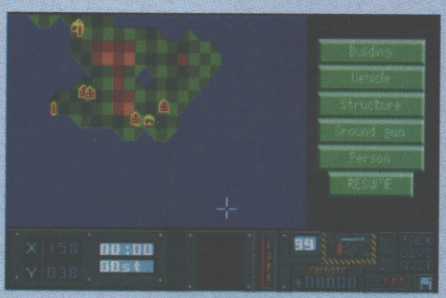
Right: On second thoughts, I think the walk might do me good.

ime

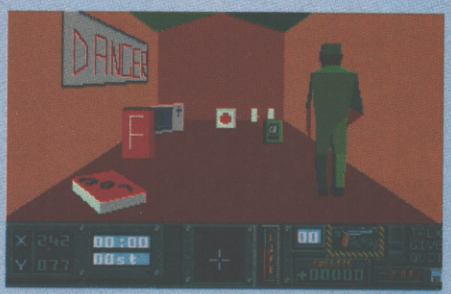
in the form of an epic multi-vehicle arcade adventure.

AND HERE'S A QUICK TIP (YES, ALREADY!)

Well, I just thought I'd slip one in. If you're in a tank or something and you find yourself getting chased by enemy tanks, the best thing to do is stop the engine, jump out and attack them with a bazooka or gun. They'll only attack you when you're actually in your tank, so the second you get out they'll stop firing and drive off or start going round in circles.



If you're stranded in the middle of nowhere with the enemy closing in from all sides, an aerial observation unit can be launched to give a bird's eye view of your surroundings. Various features can then be highlighted.



Why bother collecting weapons, ammo and equipment when you can just stroll in here for them? Because there's only one Stores, and it's right next to your base, somewhere you won't be visiting terribly often.

The map's indigenous population tends to make its presence felt: vultures hover expectantly overhead, seagulls tend to get crushed undertrack, bulls are easily provoked and rabbits and ducks make a tasty treat.

And if all else fails...

concerned and that fact that the map consists of lots of little islands with water between them.

So we've got some fairly corking 3D graphics, a huge map and plenty of ways of exploring it. What next? Well, there's a selection of missions available to be tackled, so the best thing to do is pick one and go on it.

The exact nature of the mission depends, really. There's the main one, which is an all-singing, all-dancing action adventure in which you'll have to apply your brain cells as well as your trigger finger, and then there are a series of subsidiary ones (practice missions, if you like) which will be of more appeal to military minds.

Whichever you choose, taking the right equipment is a must. Happily, all the essentials, like a map, a radar unit, a clock and a range of weaponry, can be found fairly close to the HQ where you start, while your supply of ammo can be topped up from the stores before you

'Hunter's a game that's hard to fault'

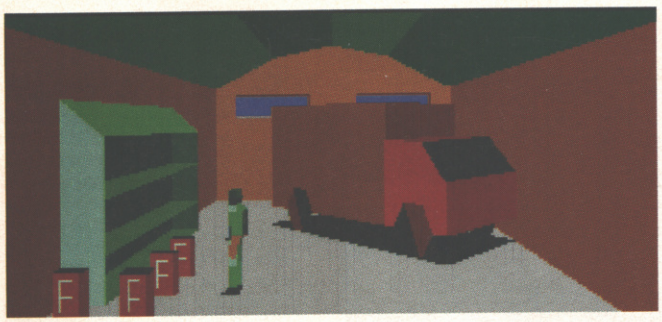
leave. You've a formidable range of kit at your disposal, including a hand gun, grenades, a bazooka and some timed explosives (which you can fix to things and run away). If all that's not enough, climbing aboard a tank or helicopter will give you access to even more.

MAKING (NOT SO) SOCIAL CALLS

If you begin to run low on anything you'd better start sticking your head round a few doorways. The landscape is packed with buildings of all descriptions: houses, power stations, lighthouses, hangers, you name it. If you're lucky you might hit upon a stash of enemy equipment, or perhaps someone with something useful to tell you (although you might have to bribe them first).

Opposition comes in the form of everything from foot-soldiers (who are best squashed) to tanks and helicopters, backed up by anti-aircraft guns and missiles. Some pretty heated battles can ensue with, for example, you taking out a fuel dump with a helicopter, getting shot down, crash-landing, leaping into a nearby armoured car and nipping off with a couple of tanks in hot pursuit.

And then there's the puzzle solving/strategy side of things. For starters there are puzzles of the information-collecting type. Then there are other things – wearing an enemy uniform will let you sneak about much more safely. And transport is always a concern. For example, your boat is running low on fuel, and you haven't got any spare. Do you risk going in search of more, or abandon the boat in favour →

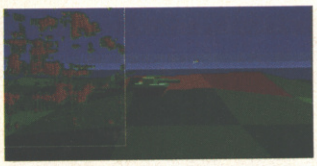


There's a range of cars, trucks and 4WDs available. They're okay for knocking about in, but don't pack much of a punch.

TRANSPORT

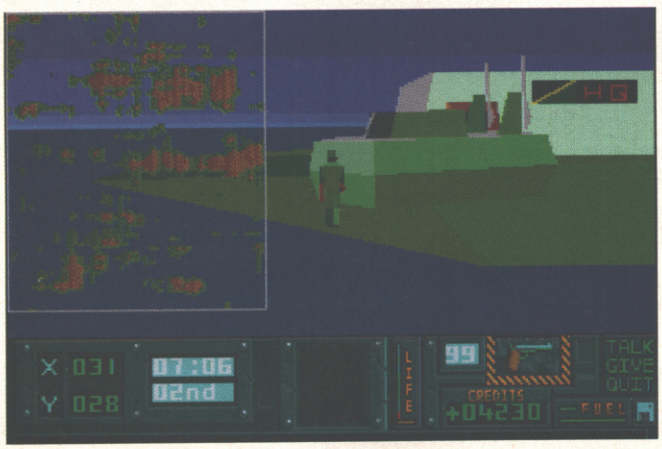
Hunter's piecè de résistance is the huge range of vehicles available to be commandeered. Forget walking – travel in style!

Eat up those miles in a helicopter gunship. They're a bast to fly, though, even worse to land, and tend to get shot down a lot, so take a parachute.

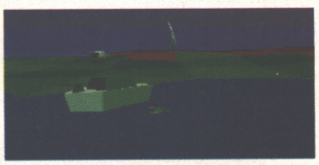


Now were're talking. Armoured cars are fast and nippy, but tanks are a bit more happening in the firepower department, and better for running over people.

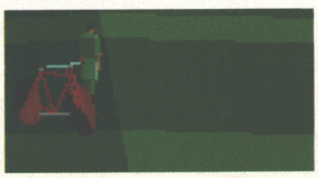
And, erm... oh dear. Still, at least they don't use much petrol, making them environmentally friendly (and handy if you haven't got any).



The best of both worlds, and surely the ultimate in ground-based transport, the hovercraft is at home on land or water. If you can find one, that is. They don't exactly grow on trees, you know.



Should you find yourself needing to take to the water, there's no shortage of boats lying around, from slow, cumbersome ships to fast, manoeuvrable gunboats.



At the bottom of the scale is the humble bike. Slow, crap, and best abandoned as quickly as possible. (Get yourself a nice mountain bike instead. And a copy of Mountain Biking UK.)

of a helicopter? The trouble then is that you might get shot down and stranded somewhere, facing the very daunting prospect of a long and slow swim home.

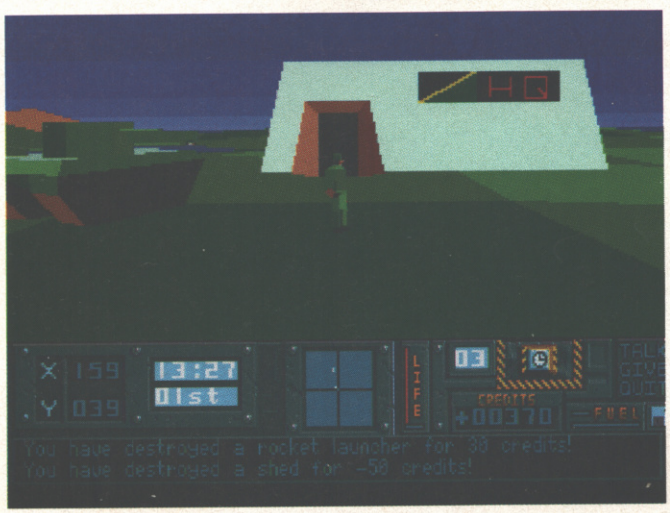
And all this time the clock's ticking away. There's a real sense of urgency to some of the missions, and they might take quite a few tries to complete within the deadline, possibly with only seconds to spare. Another thing to watch out for is nightfall. Once the sun's set it's a lot harder to find your way around, unless you either launch flares, which provide a few seconds' respite, or turn the brightness on the telly up a bit.

'There's a real sense of urgency to some of the missions'

Left: Wheels, wheels everywhere. And not a drop of petrol. Get me a bike!

DOING THINGS NAPOLEON SOLO

I know this has been a bit of a factual review, but *Hunter*'s a game that's hard to fault. (And, believe me, I've tried.) It's not quite top notch, but has no serious failings. The only pinpointable thing I noticed (and even this is a bit vague) is that it has a weird sort of 'lonely' feel to it, especially considering the battlefield conditions the action's supposed to be taking place under. You're almost grateful to see a bull charging towards you out of the distance at times, and verbal interaction with other characters is limited to them saying something and you, well, just listening.



After taking out a rocket launching a particularly menacing shed, it's time to park that tank, and go back to HQ. Mission complete, it's all in a day's work.

Apart from that everything is just as it appears, rendered in fast, smooth 3D graphics. There's masses to do and heaps of things to discover. Be prepared for a slight feeling of anti-climax when you've explored everywhere and tried everything out, but things should pick up again once you start tackling the puzzles. In case you're in any doubt, then, it gets a thumbs up from me. Well worth buying. •

JONATHAN DAVIES

UPPERS Quite good 3D graphics. Lots to discover, lots of challenging missions to go on, lots of everything, really. A cunning blend of shooting, adventuring and strategying. And, when you think about it, most of it hasn't been done before.

DOWNERS The occasional graphical glitch, and things don't appear on the screen until they're pretty close to you. There's a slightly strange atmosphere to the whole thing, too (or perhaps that's just me).

THE BOTTOM LINE

Hunter is a real all-rounder. There's something for everyone in there, all wrapped up in a believable 3D world you can get lost in for hours.

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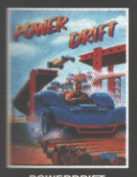

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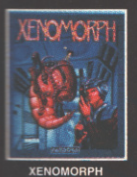

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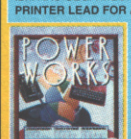

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Game: Navy Seals
Publisher: Ocean
Price: £25.39
Author: John Meegan, Bobby Earl
Release: Out now

No, it can't be... Can it? After a wait longer than Kylie Minogue's for a decent song, we've finally got a complete finished copy of *Navy Seals*. The question is, will it be worth the wait in the same way as Kylie's 'Better The Devil You Know' or, um, not. (Predictable Opening Gambit Follow-Ups No. 2).

'Nope.'

Pretty (and pretty dark) intro screens pop up before – but not after – the levels.

LEVEL ONE

Use your cunning and stealth to set bombs on all missile crates, then its on to the next level. Watch out for terrorists though, and that all-important time limit!

NAVY SEALS

The terrorists only shoot at you when they actually see you. So I've no idea what he's doing.

Here you are at the start. I don't know what you're standing around for – the time limit's a real bitch.

This is just about the nastiest bit of the level. The only way in is to drop down from above, and that's likely to cost you a chunk of energy.

After the high standard set by last month's remarkable coin-op conversion of

THE SAME OLD SONG AND DANCE

I don't know, you'd think after taking such a long time over it, Ocean would have made sure that this was a damn good product, but it hasn't happened. *Navy Seals* is the kind of game that software houses used to churn out by the barrow-load a couple of years ago – a runny-jumpy-shooty platform thing with no real innovations but lots of straightforward action to keep the punters happy just long enough for the next one to come out. (Cynical old sod, am I not?)

It was all very well at the time, but most of us saw through this rather obvious ploy a couple of years back, forcing game's companies to come up more original releases every now and again. Now though, and rather worryingly, Ocean seem to have decided that the market is ready for an encore performance. First came *RoboCop 2*, then *Total Recall*, and now this, the latest in a disturbing line of remarkably similar games, all movie licenses with little resemblance to (or feel for) the respective films.

What really bothers me, though, is that they seem to be getting slowly worse. There was a time, very recently, when Ocean was a company that could be relied on for classy, polished products. Sadly, the days of *Pang*, *Puzznic*, *Plotting*, *Midnight Resistance*, *Battle Command*, *Batman* and (of course) *Rainbow Islands* – all excellent games and, indeed, nearly all of them fixtures in our All-Time Top 100 – seem behind us now and the standard has slipped alarmingly.

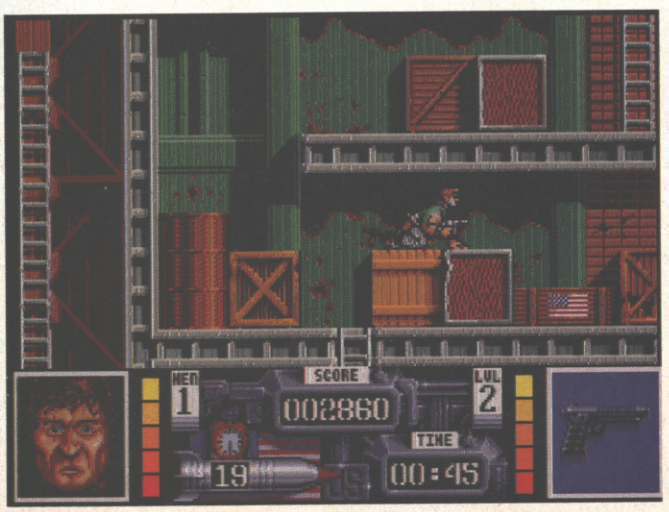
But before I get off the subject entirely, what about *Navy Seals*?

Well, it's not that bad. Which is to say that it's pretty bad, just not altogether terrible. In its favour it's got some very nice animation and a decent level of challenge, but drawbacks include a lack of depth and some of the worst juddery scrolling seen on an Amiga for years. And that's it. Except that I've got another page to fill up yet, so I suppose I'd better expand on things a bit.

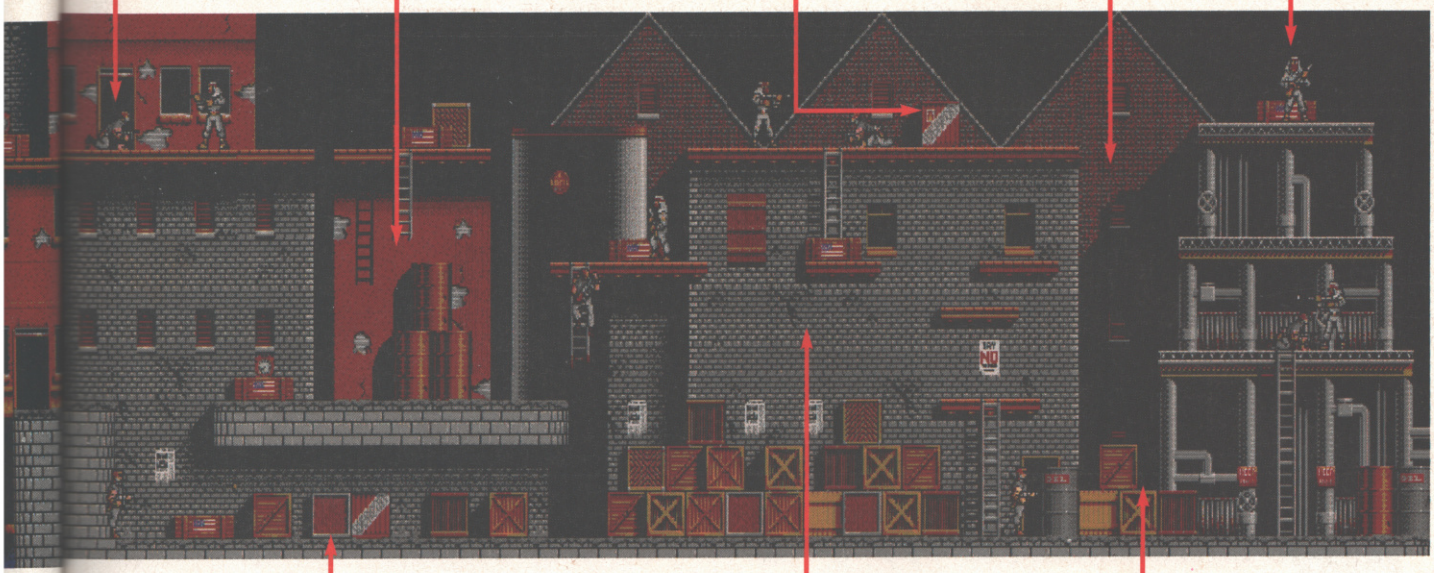
First off, all of you out there with runaway testosterone levels will lap up the scenario. The *Navy Seals* are the US equivalent of the SAS, so there's plenty of scope for square-jawed, muscle-flexing, homo-erotic antics to thrill spotty inadequates everywhere. The plot, such as it is, involves massacring large numbers of unspecified 'terrorists' (although they all look suspiciously Arabic), rescuing weak and helpless hostages (a captured helicopter crew in this case), and then slaughtering your way

Level three is strongly reminiscent of the venerable arcader *Green Beret*, but without the subtlety.

Being able to shin up the lamp-posts is a nice touch – and can come in handy for foiling ambushes.



Often you'll find space at a premium so you'll have to crawl to reach your goal.



Toki, Ocean surprisingly fail to deliver the goods with their *Navy Seals* licence.

subtly through downtown Beirut to destroy a stockpile of captured Stinger rockets. (Actually, that 'subtly' bit was a lie.) Alternatively, of course, you could simply pretend that Beirut was Baghdad, the Stingers were Scuds, and the Arabs were Iraqis (no great leap of imagination called for there), and recreate Operation Desert Storm in the comfort of your own home. If you're sad enough.

BIG, HARD, CLEVER AND AQUATIC

So that's enough scenario. How about the actual gameplay? Well, as it happens, it's pretty much *Navy Seals*' strongest point. The platforms-and-ladders-and-shooting-things style isn't anything new, but here it's at least been fairly well executed, with lots of acrobatic moves both possible and necessary. Your performing Seals can certainly leap around with no little aplomb, although for the hardest men the US armed services have to offer they're surprisingly weedy when it comes to falling distances greater than about six feet. It's not perfect though – certain irritating bad guys shoot at you before they have the nerve to show their faces on screen, killing you nine times out of ten (of course) and making it necessary to learn where they are so you can be ready for them next time. As regular readers will know, this is one of my least favourite gameplay devices, and it's particularly unfortunate and lazy in a fast-reactions arcade game like this one.

Also indicative of lazy design is the extremely tight time limit on every level – something which usually feels artificial and intrusive, though in this case it actually works quite well in keeping the excitement going. (I'm not sure why, possibly because it distances the thing from its completely lame movie tie-in aspect and makes it feel more like a pure game).

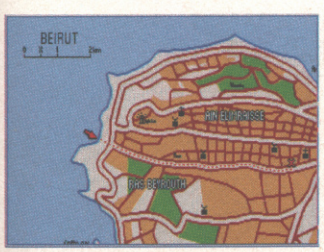
'*Navy Seals* is the kind of game that software houses used to churn out by the barrow-load'

Presentation? Well, yes, it's got some. Ahem. There's a strange kind of schizophrenia displayed here (well, no stranger than your everyday run-of-the-mill schizophrenia, but you know what I mean) – each level is preceded by a pretty little cameo screen, but on completing it there's nothing, nothing at all. You get a few bonus points and that's it, not even a 'well done' message. The ending is also utterly, utterly feeble.

Sound? No it isn't. The music is useless and the FX are perfunctory, to say the least. And that's all I can bring myself to tell you about them.

And finally, the graphics are...alright. The animation is lovely in some parts (climbing up crates, swinging along under platforms) and dire in others (running, climbing ladders, swinging up onto platforms), while the backdrops are fairly atmospheric but maybe a little on the formulaic side.

When it all comes down to it though, *Navy Seals*' biggest flaw is a lack of variety. The eight levels are all as near as makes no difference to being completely identical. The difficulty only increases in numerical terms (either more baddies or more rockets to destroy) and, while addictive in the short term, this rapidly leads to the onset of boredom. Technically the game looks like an ST port (I thought we'd seen the last of those) and generally the feeling is one of overwhelming indifference. • ***STUART CAMPBELL***



'Just go straight down the street, take the first left at the traffic lights, and shoot everybody you can see.'

You can't hang under platforms like this for too long, or your Seal will get tired and drop off.

UPPERS No-nonsense arcade platform zapper that you can just pick up the joystick and dive straight into.

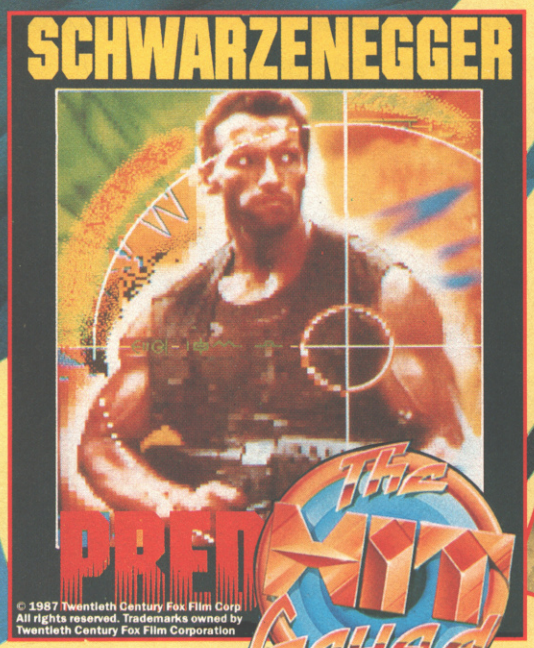
DOWNERS There's practically nothing to it, and what there is looks like it's been cobbled together in a bit of a hurry.

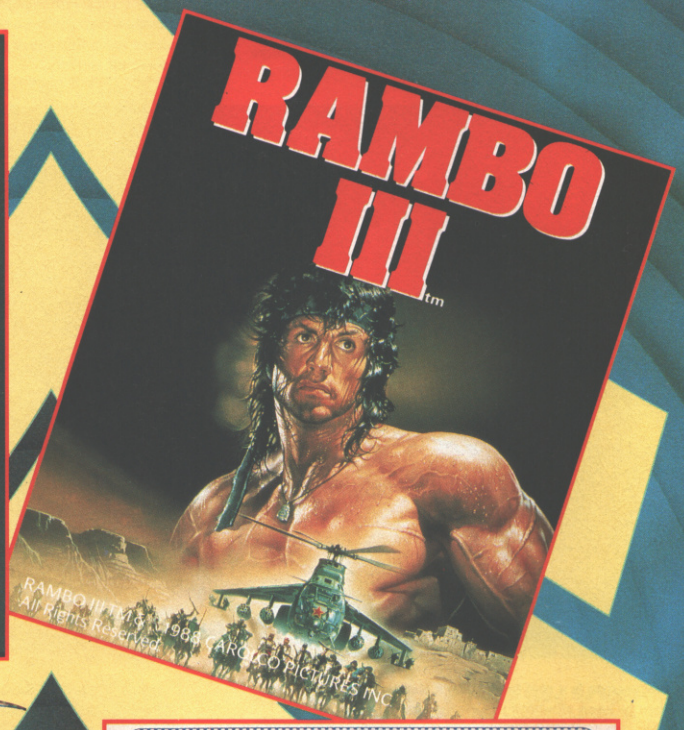
THE BOTTOM LINE

A long-awaited game (presumably because it's been held over to tie in with the release of the by-all-accounts-awful movie), but now it's finally out you tend to wonder why they bothered. Playable , but extremely average in most respects.

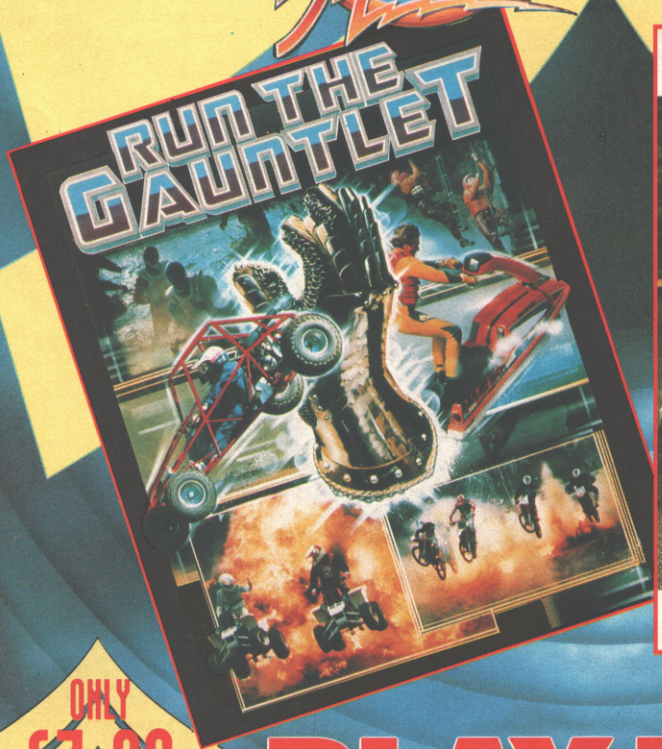
61 PERCENT

TAKE ON THE SQUAD





The Hit Squad



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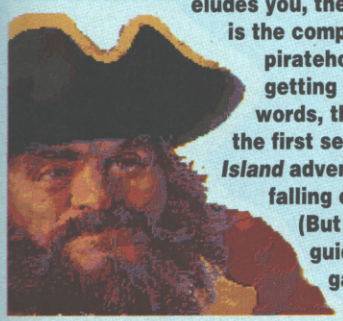
Complete Control is at its biggest ever this month – a massive 11 pages – making it the largest tips section in *any* Amiga mag. We need them this month too – not only do we have a complete solution to the first half of *Prince Of Persia*, there's the Bitmaps' massive guide to *Gods*, a whole bundle of codes and hints for *Logical*, and then this, the solution (and map!) to the first part of the highest scoring AMIGA POWER game ever...

COMPLETE CONTROL

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND

Shiver me timbers and roll out the clichés. For your delight and delectation, our resident rogue Mark Ramshaw has lashed together the complete AMIGA POWER guide to piracy (not of the software nature, of course). If *The Secret Of Monkey Island* eludes you, then read on – contained within is the complete guide to attaining piratehood, gaining a crew, and getting your hands on a ship. In other words, the solution to Mêlée Island, the first section of Lucasfilm's *Monkey Island* adventure romp. It's as easy as falling off the plank.

(But try and use as little of the guide as possible – you'll find the game a lot more fun if you do it on your own!)



Your adventure will begin at the lookout point (**1**). Start a conversation with the lookout man, as he will tell you where to begin your quest. (Anyway, he's worth a laugh or three).

Walk along the docks (**2**), and enter the Scumm Bar (**3**). Once inside, walk to the right of the bar, to the long table with three (important looking) pirates seated there. Talk to them, explaining that you want to be a pirate. Continuing talking until they tell you about the three trials which must be passed in order to attain piratehood. Then go to the door at the far righ, and open it. The cook will shout at you to go away. Wait for him to walk off the left of the screen, then quickly walk through the door. You will now be in the kitchen. Pick up the pot and the hunk of meat, then open the door to the right, and walk through it. Walk to the end of the jetty, causing the seagull to fly away, then quickly pick up the fish before it comes back again. Walk left into the kitchen, left again into the bar, then back onto the docks.

Go back up the cliffside, past the lookout and round the corner. This will take you to the main island map. Then go to the circus tent as indicated on the main map (**11**). Once you are in the forest (**23**), walk left until you see the circus tent, then go inside (**22**). Here the Fetuccini Brothers will be busy arguing. Interrupt them, and ask them how much they pay you to do the human cannonball stunt.

Agree to the offer, and tell them that you do have a helmet. Use the pot as a helmet, the stunt will then take place, and you will be paid in full. Exit the tent, go back up the path (**23**). You will return to the main map screen (**11**). Go back to the lookout point (**1**), down to the docks (**2**) and continue right, until you reach the main street (**5**).

Here a citizen of Melee will attempt to sell you a map. He will do this in code (as tradition dictates of course). When he asks you about Sven, tell him that you know someone called Dominique. Then tell him that you'll take the map, and walk left and up, to the Voodoo Shop (**6**). Walk inside, go to the trunk, and get the chicken. Then walk back out into the main street (**5**).

Walk up the screen under the arch and you will enter the second area of the village (**7**). Enter the right-most building (the store) (**8**). Once inside pick up the sword and the shovel. Then talk to the storekeeper. Buy the sword and the shovel, then exit the shop. Wait for a 'Pssst' message to appear, then walk to the alley (**9**). Here the sheriff will introduce himself (boo, hiss etc). Walk left, then back to the main street (**5**), left along the docks (**2**), past the lookout (**1**), and onto the main map screen (**11**).

Head for the house to the far right of the map. Before you get there you will encounter the bridge (**4**), and the troll (shriek!). The troll will initially refuse to let you past. Give him the fish though and he will. Continue along the road, to the house.

Once at the house (**12**), attempt to open the door. The swordfighter will answer. Ask him to train you, insisting that you have what it takes to become a swordsman. Let the swordsman have 30 pieces of eight, and when show him your sword when he asks to see it. The training will then commence (**13**).

In order to gain enough experience to fight the swordmaster, go near to the fork in the road (**17**) (don't actually aim directly for it)and wait for a pirate to cross your path. You will then have to duel with him, in both swordplay and wordplay. By getting pirates to insult you, you can learn that insult and then use it yourself. Then, if the pirate is clever enough and knows the reply, you can also learn that. Continue to fight pirates here until you build up as many of the twenty possible insults (and associated replies) as possible. To get an idea of just what you need, check out the insults box. Listed are the insults, and their counter replies (though you can't use any until you actually learn them).

Some replies are suitable for more than one insult. This technique is needed when you actually face the swordmaster, who will use insults which you haven't previously encountered. If you've collected enough insults (gained the replies) already, you should have a suitable reply to counter-insult her with.

Once on the main map screen (**11**), walk to the fork in the road (**17**), then go back into (ie up) the screen. Here you will see a yellow plant. Pick up the yellow petals, then go to the chasm with the signpost. Push this sign, and a bridge will appear. You will then be free to walk right, until you reach the swordmaster's house.

Once at the swordmaster's house (**24**), walk over to her and start talking to her (ie tell her that you've come to kill her). The fight will then start. Use your insulting skills, as learned from the various pirates along the way, and you should have little trouble defeating her. She will then give you a T-Shirt which should ensure that everybody believes in your swordsmanship.

The next step is to recover the treasure. Go back to the entrance to the woods and look at the map (which you purchased from the citizen of Mêlée in the main street (**5**)). The dance steps are actually directions. Back means move back into the screen, and right and left simply mean left and right off the current screen. Once these moves have been carried out, you should find yourself at a clearing (**25**). Walk to the right and use the shovel on the bit of ground marked at X. The treasure is actually a T-shirt. Read the message on the T-shirt, then walk back left, and out of the forest onto the main map (**11**).

It's then time to pay a visit to the governor's mansion. Go back to the village, right along the docks (**2**), left through village, until you reach the house at the far left (**18**). Here you will encounter the deadly piranha poodles. Use the yellow petals on the hunk of meat, then give the meat to the poodles. You will be able to open the main door and enter the mansion (**19**). Once inside an ever-so-slightly bizarre sequence of events will take place (you won't be able to control any of this). Once this sequence is over, go back out of the mansion, right back along the path into the village (**7**) and into the jail (**10**).

Once inside, talk to the prisoner, go back out and into the store (**8**). Talk to the storekeeper and ask him for a breath mint. Then go back to the jail (**10**) and give the breath mints to the prisoner. Ask him if he has a file, then give him the gopher repellent. He will then give you a cake. Open the cake, and inside you will find a file.

Leave the jail, and go back to the governor's mansion (**18**). Once inside (**19**), walk over to the gaping hole. Once again a bizarre sequence of events will unfold, leaving you in possession of the fabulous idol. The sheriff will stop you before you get a chance to leave. The governor will then appear and send the sheriff away. Once you've finished talking to the governor, walk left to the front door, and open the door. The sheriff will appear, and whatever you say to him, he will throw you off the dock. →

INSULTING YOUR WAY TO THE PINNACLE OF PIRACY

I've got a long, sharp lesson for you to learn today.
OR This is the END for you, you gutter crawling cur!
– And I've got a little TIP for you. Get the POINT?

My tongue is sharper than any sword.
OR Soon you'll be wearing my sword like a shish kebab.
– First you'd better stop waving it like a feather duster.

My name is feared in every dirty corner of this island!
– So you got that job as janitor, after all.

Now I know what filth and stupidity really are.
OR I've spoken with apes more important than you.
– I'm glad to hear you attended your family reunion.

My wisest enemies run away at the first sight of me!
OR People fall at my feet when they see me coming.
OR EVEN I usually see people like you passed out on tavern floors.
– Even BEFORE they smell your breath?

Only once have I met such a coward!
– He must have taught you everything you know.

If your brother's like you, better to marry a pig.
OR You make me want to puke.
– You make me think somebody already did.

My sword is famous all over the Caribbean!
OR I've heard you are a comtemptible sneak.
– Too bad no one's heard of YOU at all.

No one will ever catch ME fighting as badly as you do.
OR Nobody's drawn blood from me and nobody ever will.
– You run THAT fast?

I will milk every drop of blood from your body!
– How appropriate. You fight like a cow.

My last fight ended with my hands covered with blood.
OR I got this scar on my face during a mighty struggle.
– I hope now you've learned to stop picking your nose.

I hope you have a boat ready for a quick escape.
OR Have you stopped wearing diapers yet.
– Why, did you want to borrow one?

I've got the courage and skill of a master swordsman!
OR You're no match for my brains you poor fool.
– I'd be in real trouble if you ever used them.

Every word you say to me is stupid.
OR You have the manners of a beggar.
– I wanted to make sure you'd feel comfortable with me.

I'm not going to take your insolence sitting down.
OR You are a pain in the backside, sir!
– Your hemorrhoids are flaring up again, eh?

There are no clever moves that can help you now.
OR There are no words for how disgusting you are.
– Yes there are. You just never learned them.

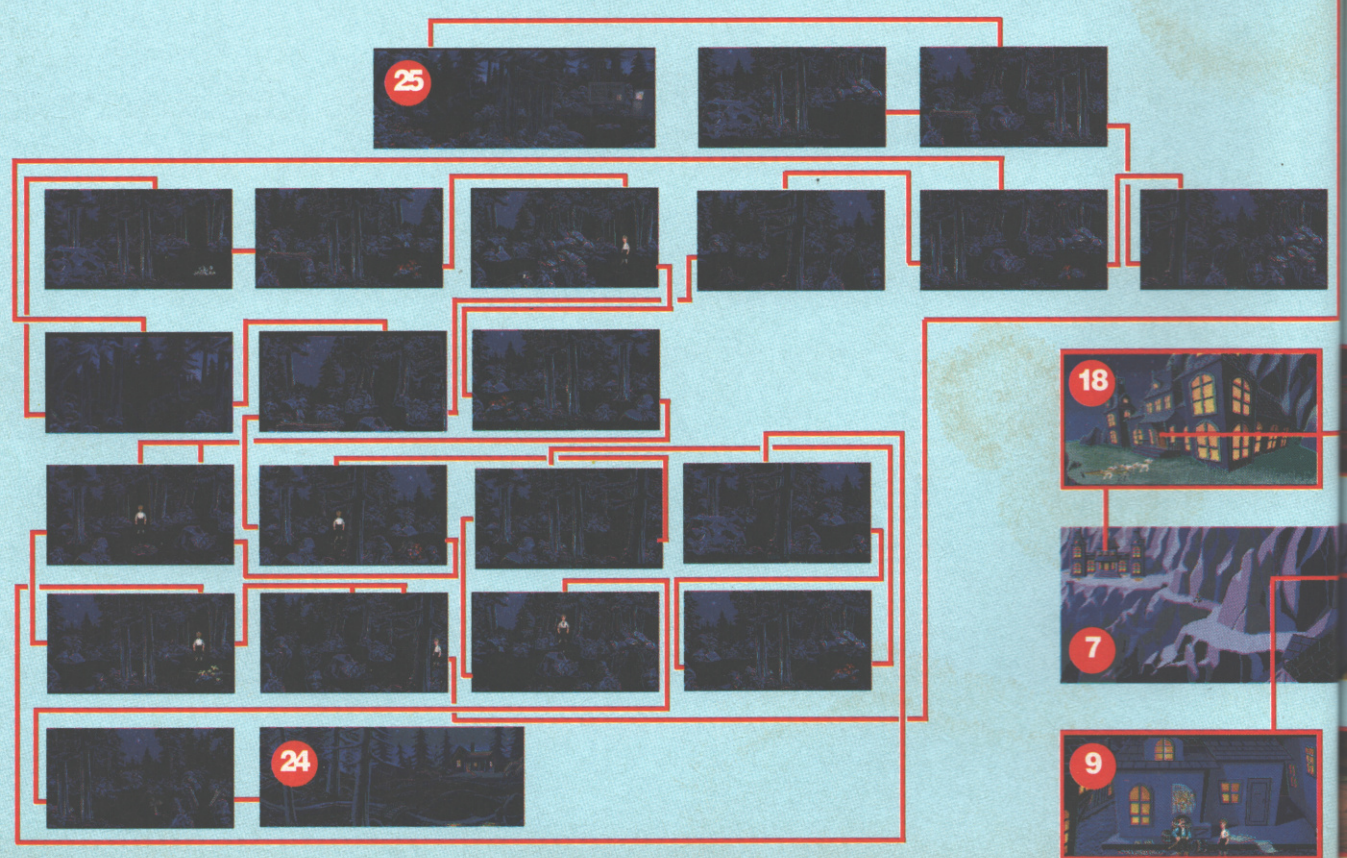
Mêlée Island – from The Secret Of Monkey Island

Once underwater (**20**), you must pick up the idol. You will then collect your belongings, and climb back onto the dock. The lookout will then arrive, telling you that the Governor has been kidnapped. Ask him about it, and you will be given a note from Le-Chuck.

Go back to the dock (**2**) and into Scumm bar (**3**). Collect all the mugs from tables, then ask the cook what is wrong, and ask him where you can get hold of a ship. Then go right, into the kitchen, and walk over to the barrel.

Use a mug on the barrel, and make your way to the jail (**10**) as quickly as possible. The grog from the barrel will eat its way through the mug very quickly. By pouring the grog from one mug to another (use melting mug on an empty mug) as you make your way to the jail it is possible to keep it contained. Once inside, use the mug on the lock. This will free the prisoner. Talk to him, and try to get him to join your crew. He will run away, whatever you say.

The next step is to go back to the main island screen (**11**), and head northwards to Hook Island (**15**). Walk to the cable, and use the chicken to get across to the other side. Once there, open the door, and enter the house.



Here you will meet Meathook (**16**), who will tell you that he doesn't like visitors. Inform him of the kidnapping, and your intention to get a crew together. He will then set you a test. Once he has opened all the doors to the unspeakable horror he will run away. Open the little door, and tickle the murderous winged devil. Meathook will then agree to be in your crew (who could refuse anybody so brave?).
Go back onto the main island screen (**11**) and return to the swordmaster's house (**24**). Tell her that the governor has been kidnapped, and she will offer to join your crew. Walk back to the path, out onto the main map screen, and go east to Stan's Ship Emporium.

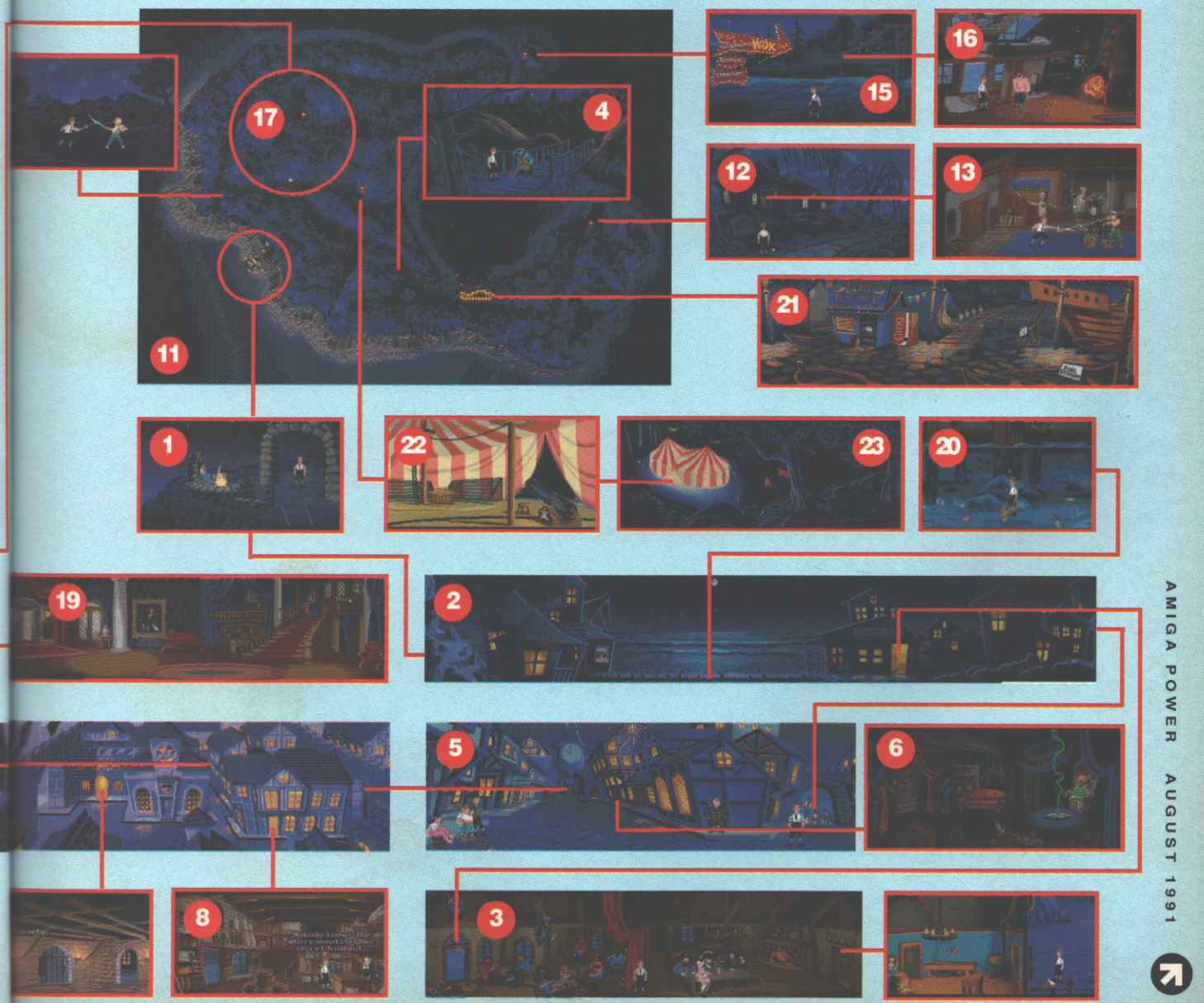
Once you've entered Stan's Ship Emporium (**21**), Stan will immediately attempt to sell you everything. Tell him that you don't have much money to spend, and that you want credit. Stan will turn you down, so tell him that you want to think about it some more, and leave. Before you go, Stan will give you his card and a compass (which always points to Stan's Emporium – how useful).

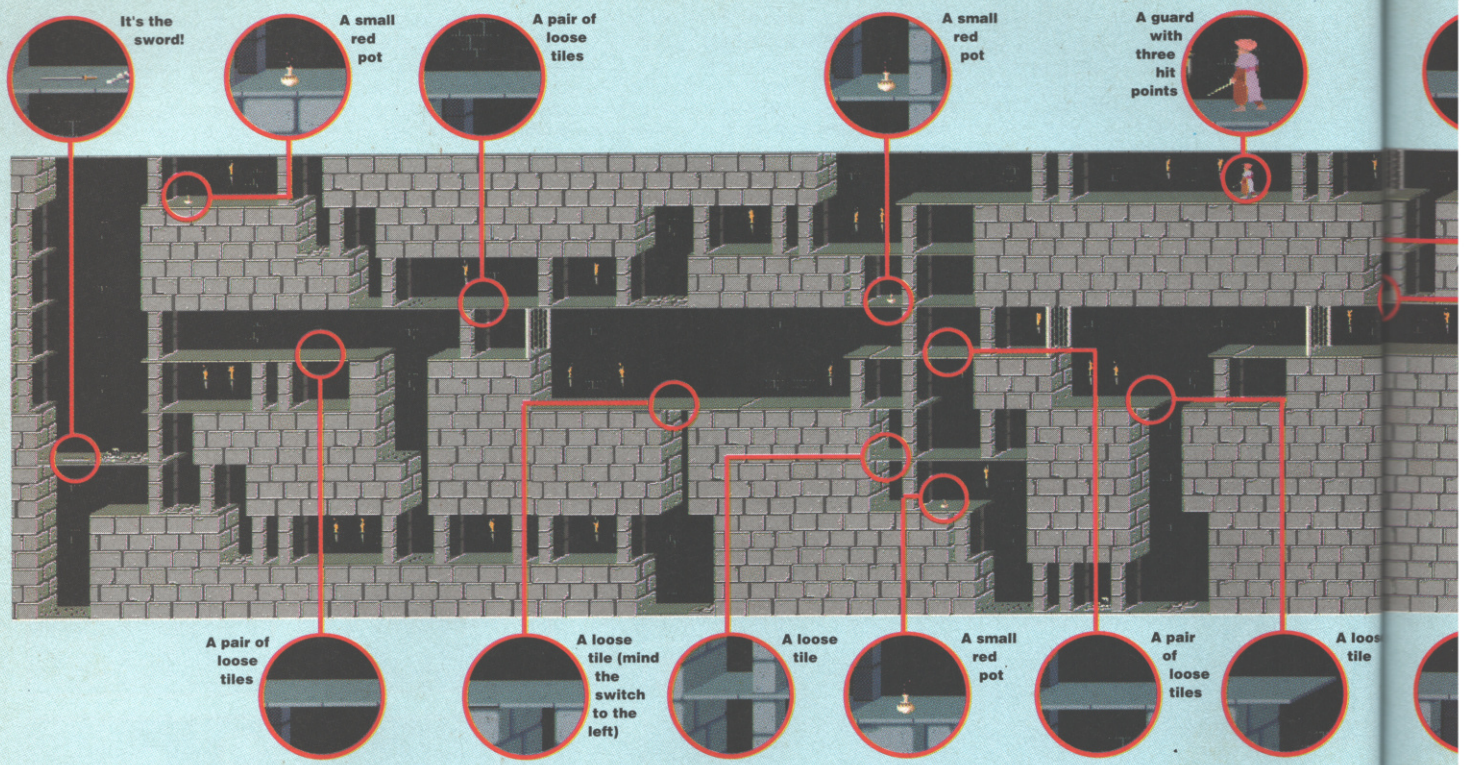
Go back into the village (**7**) (via the usual dock-side route) and go back into the shop (**8**). Talk the shopkeeper and ask him for a credit note. When he asks whether you are employed, say yes, and he will get the note from the safe. Make a note of the combination when he does this! The storekeeper will then ask you about your employment, and will decide that you are lying. He will then put the note back into the safe (double check the combination). Ask him to go see the swordmaster one more time. Once he's out of the door, walk to the safe, then use the PUSH and PULL commands to open the safe. PUSH will turn the lever to the right by 90 degrees. and PULL will turn it left by 90 degrees. Once the safe is open, get the credit note, then go back into the main street (**7**), back to the main island map (**11**) and back to the Ship Emporium (**21**).

Stan will still be there. Ask to see the cheapest ship again, and tell him that you have a credit note. Ask Stan to talk about the extras. Whenever he tells you about one, tell him that you can live without that particular piece of junk, and go onto the next one. Once you've discussed all the extras (there are quite a few, so be patient) ask Stan just how much he thinks that the ship is worth. Tell him that you don't want it, and start to leave. He'll call you back, then tell him that he's right, and make him an offer of 5000 pieces of eight for the cheap ship. He'll agree to this. Walk left out of the yard, back onto the main map screen (**11**), and back to the docks (**2**) at the south-west of the island. Here Stan will greet you, giving you some literature, and after a tearful moment, your crew will join you, ready for the adventure ahead.

Okay, that's the hard bit out the way. All that's left now is to set out on the high seas, in a heroic bid to rescue the governess and defeat the evil LeChuck. No problem for an accomplished pirate. (And no, we're ot going to tell you how to do it – not yet, anyway. You don't want us to spoil all the fun, surely?)

Thanks to Maff Evans for his help (and refusal to spoil things by giving direct answers) when I was desperately stuck in the mysteries of *Monkey Island*.





LEVEL ONE

Here it is! Brought to you by our very own Gary Penn, the first instalment of the *Prince Of Perisa* Playing Guide. With full level maps, and helpful hints on key areas, you can while away night after Arabian night on this absolute corker of a game. Here we go...

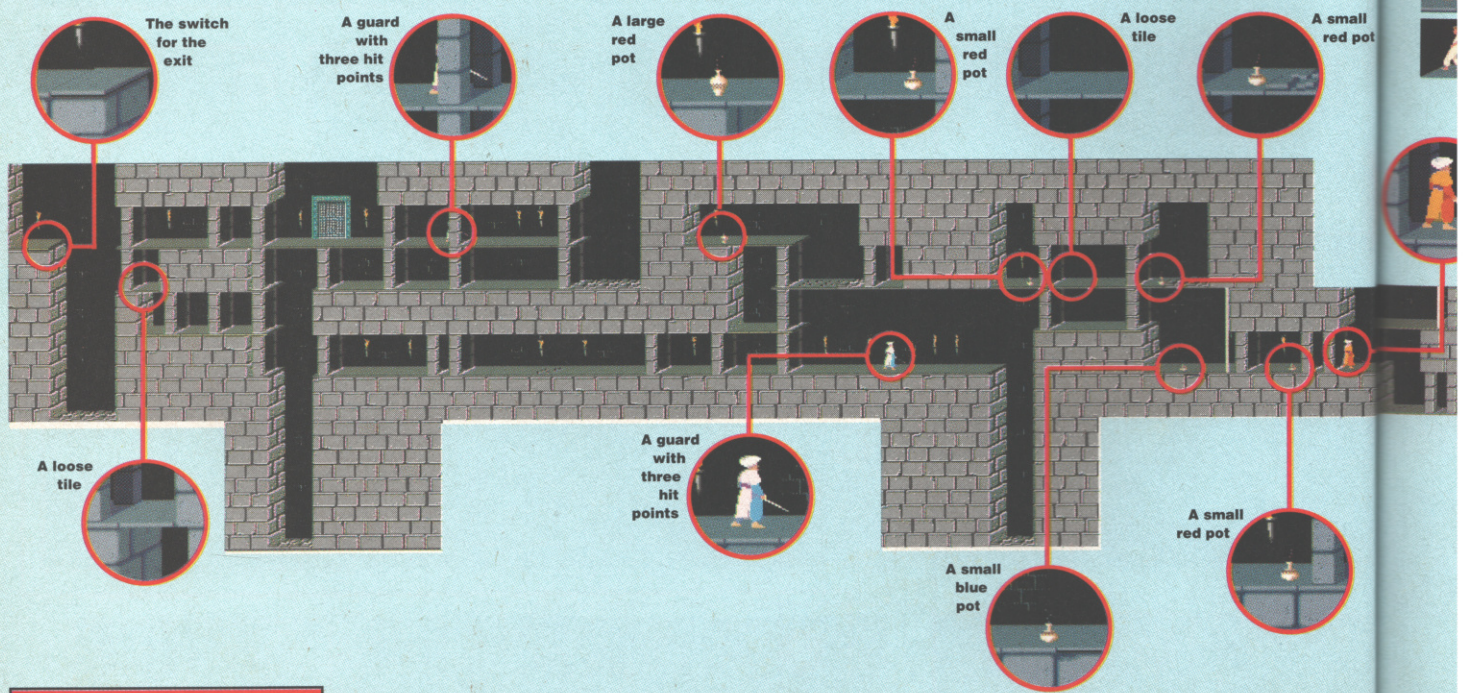
POTIONS

SMALL RED POT
Restores one unit of energy.

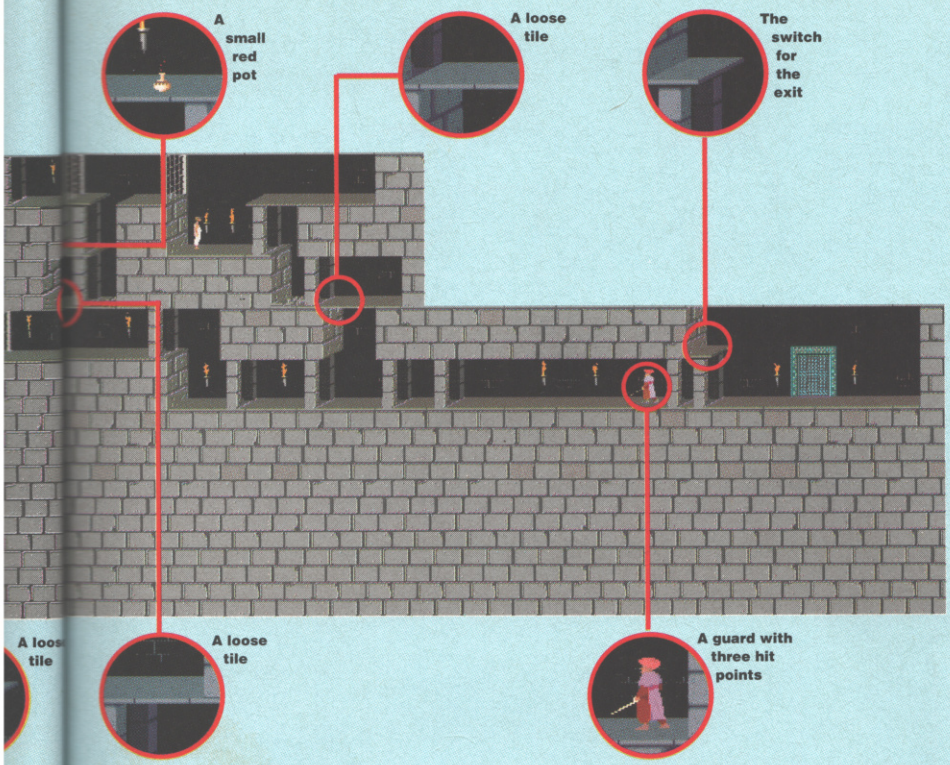
SMALL BLUE POT
Removes one unit of energy.

LARGE RED POT
Restores energy to full and adds one unit for good measure.

GREEN POT
Magic potions. These are few and far between. The effects vary and are detailed in full where appropriate.



LEVEL TWO



TRIGGERS

Opens its corresponding gate.

Closes its corresponding gate.

LOOSE TILES
Some tiles collapse on touch. To find out which tiles will fall, jump straight up (ensure that you won't push a loose tile above). Any loose tiles on the same level or that immediately above will wobble. To safely remove loose tiles from below, without incurring an injury, simply use careful steps to position yourself to face the right-hand edge. Jump up then hold down the firebutton, ready to take a careful step to the right when you land. These loose tiles invariably lead to secret passages, and more often than not to a lovely hidden potion or two.

THE GUARDS
The guards have acute hearing. They turn to face in the direction of suspicious sounds – such as heroes running. However, the guards cannot hear careful steps, so put them to good use when you'd rather not alert a guard on a platform above or below you.

SPIKES
Simply careful step through them.

RAZOR GATES
Take careful steps right up to the edge of the gate until you can walk no more. As soon as the gate has shut, take a careful step through it.

SWORDPLAY
Most of the guards are aggressive opponents who can't wait to skewer you. As soon as one moves towards you, thrust. Practice parrying then immediately thrusting with the first guard. You need to master this as some of the later guards don't move until you do.

TAKE HEED

To perform a long jump you need a run-up of at least three tiles. Beware that you cannot fall more than six blocks in depth without dying. To help you guage those tricky steps and jumps, here are the distances involved...

STANDARD STEP
Approximately one-and-a-half tiles.

CAREFUL STEPS
Approximately half a tile.

STANDING JUMP
Approximately two-and-a-half tiles.

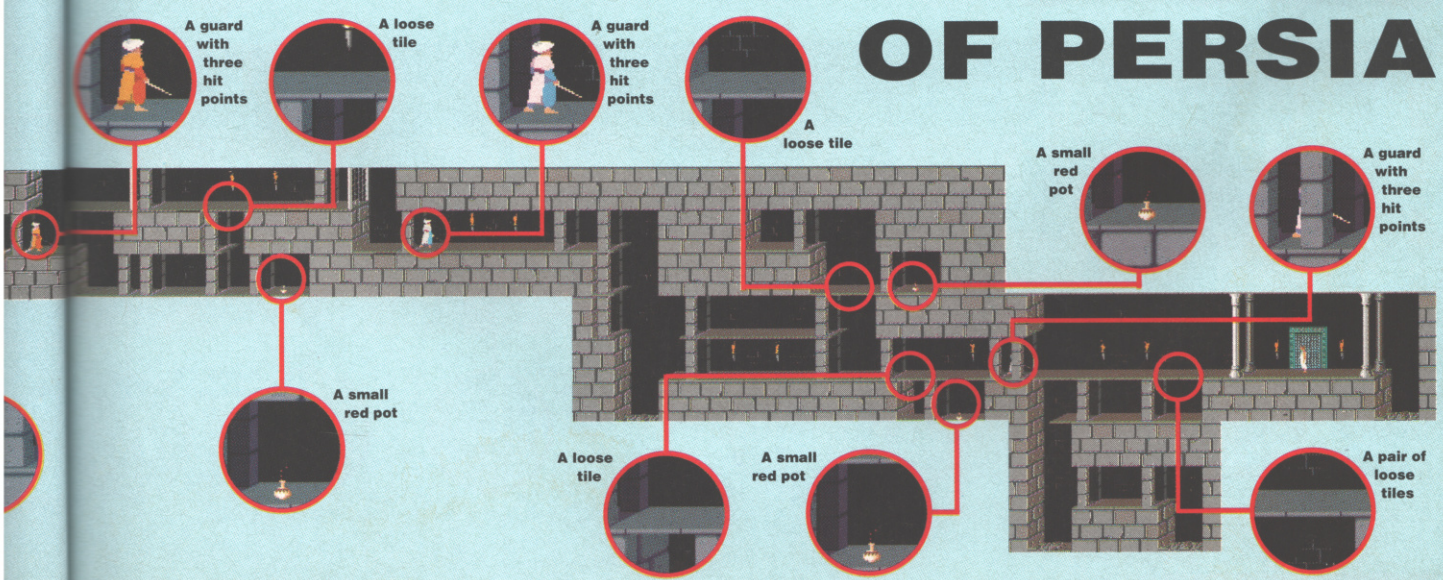
RUNNING JUMP
Approximately three tiles.

JUMP UP
Approximately one footstep.

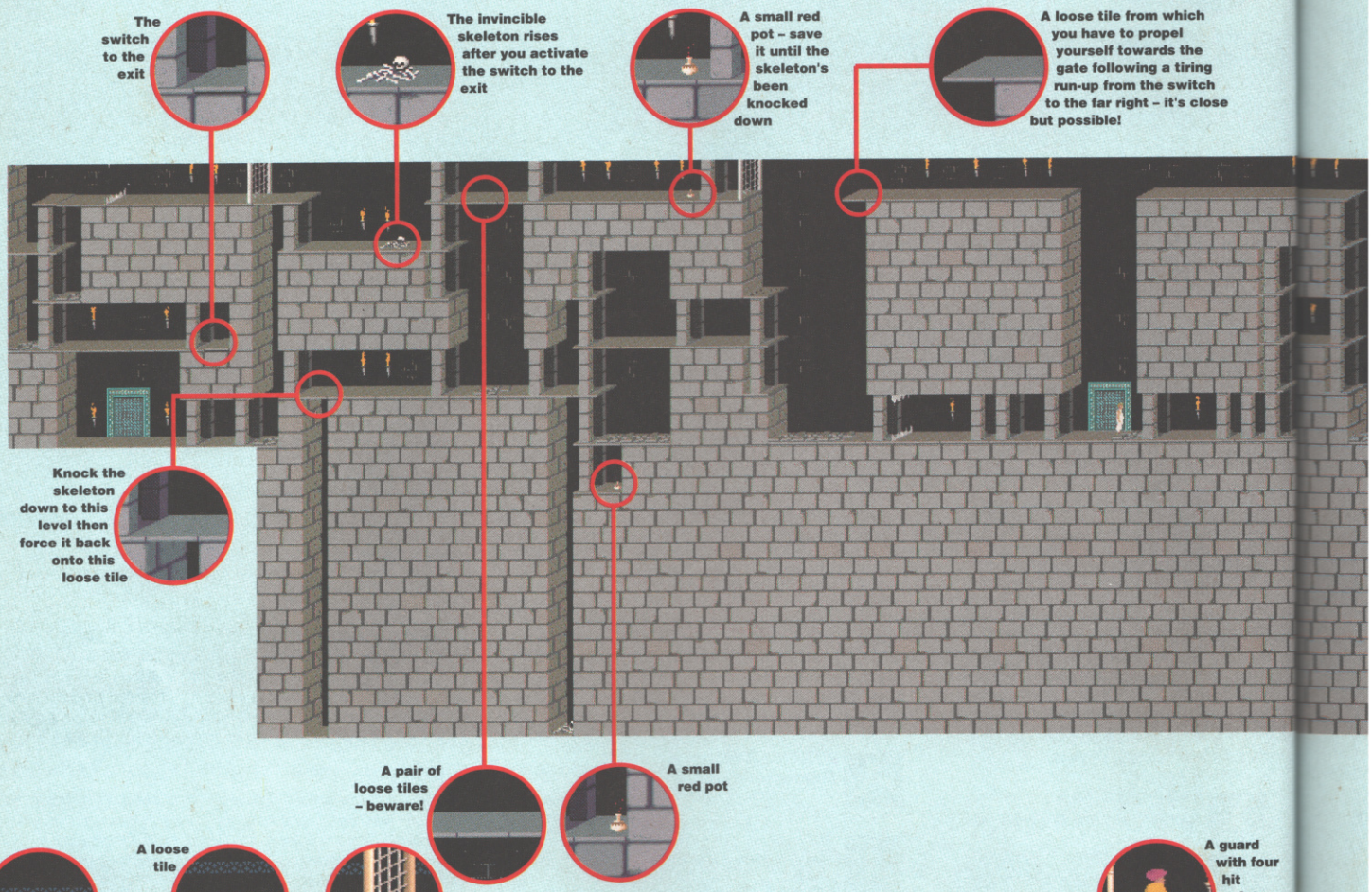
AND FINALLY

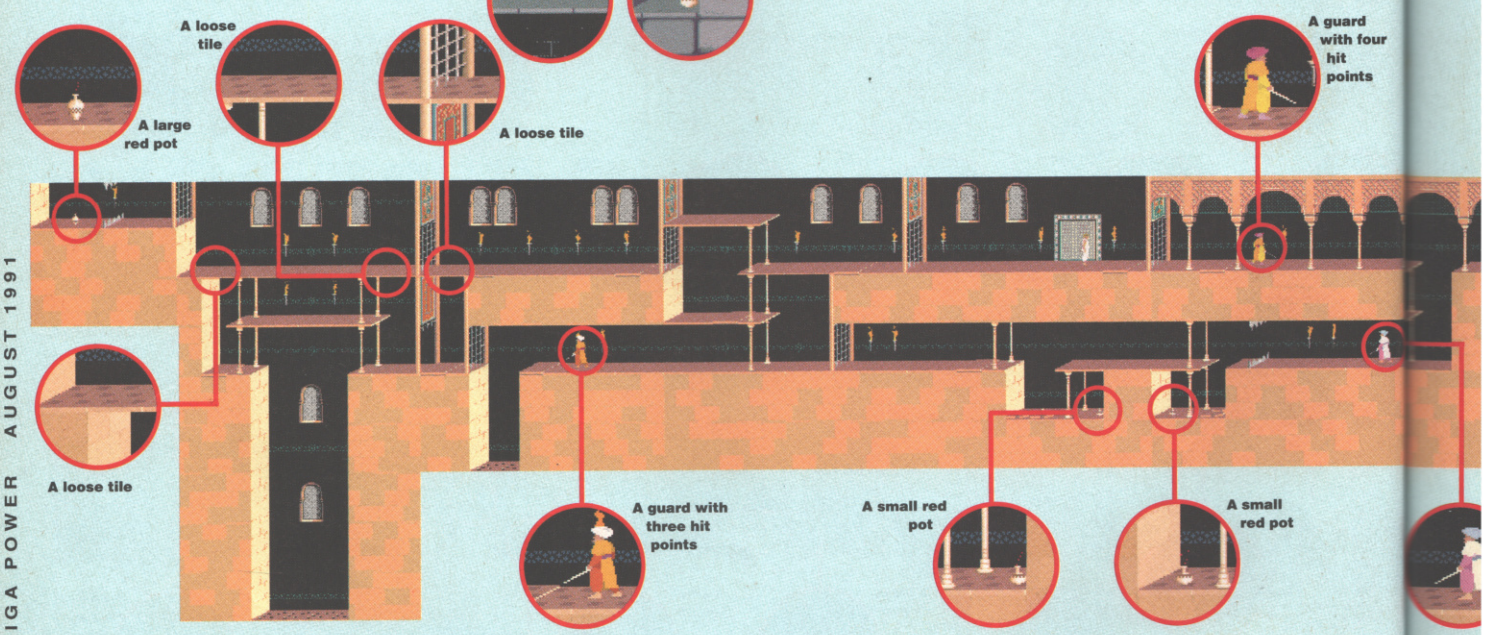
Here's a challenge of sorts from *Prince Of Persia*'s author, Jordan Mechner: Try completing *Prince Of Persia* without actually killing any guards. It's difficult, but not impossible to parry their blows and pass them before running away.

PRINCE OF PERSIA

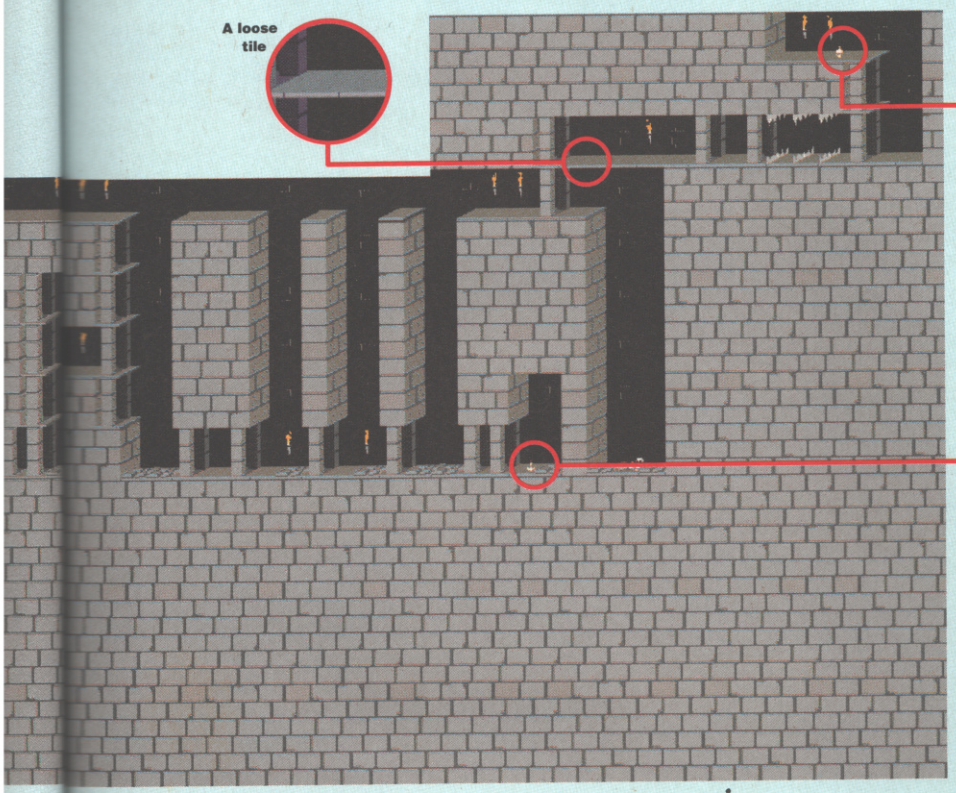


LEVEL THREE

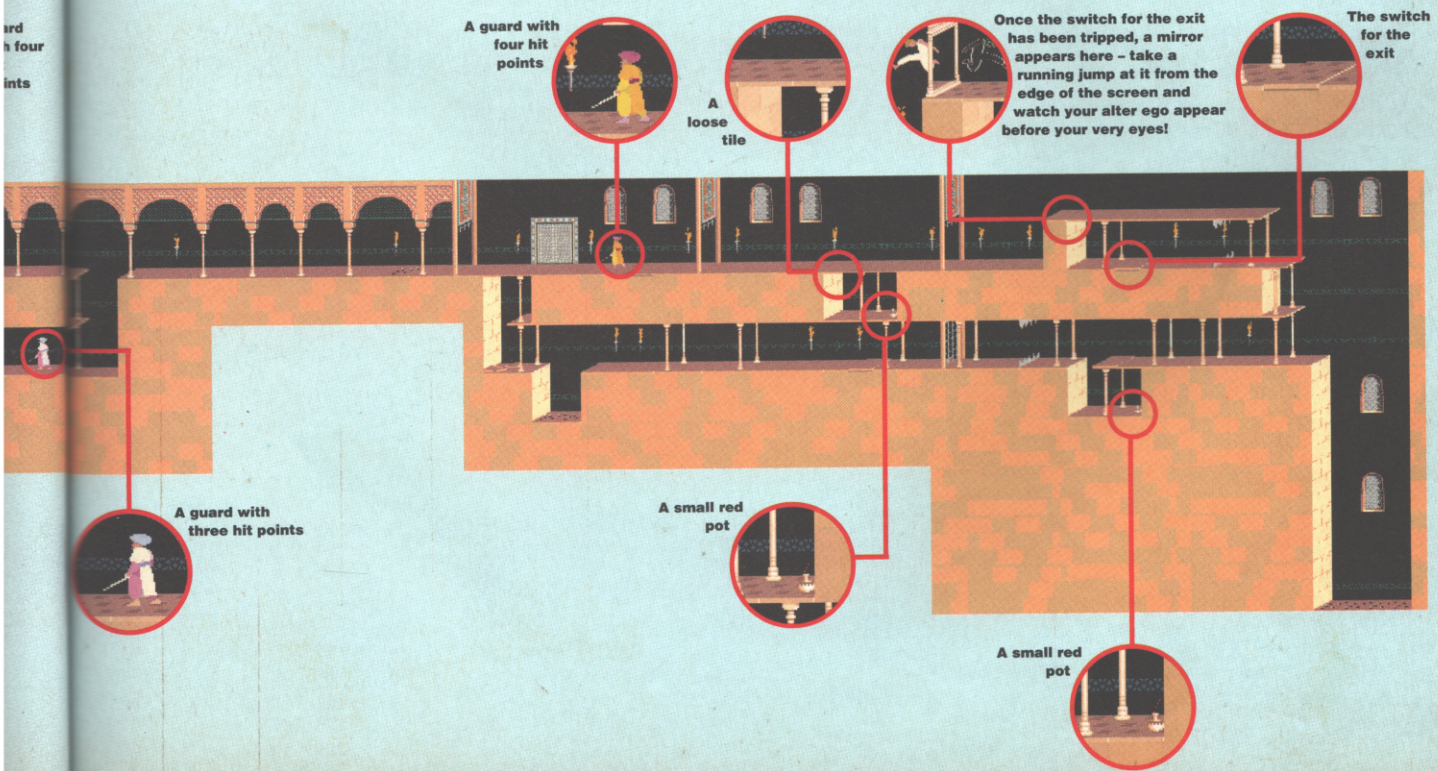




LEVEL FOUR



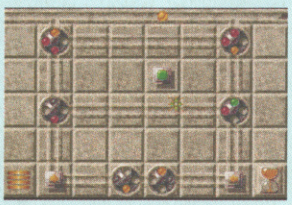
Next month: Our giant *Prince Of Persia* guide continues, with levels five to twelve – if we can fit them all in, that is!



LOGIC

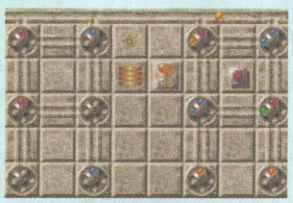
If you're stuck in Rainbow Arts' marble-shunting puzzler, or if you're just fed up with playing the same old screens, then wave goodbye to snoozeaway misery with AMIGA POWER! Courtesy of Lesley and Andy Haywood of Selby, here are the level codes for each of the game's 100 levels, including the password which lets you access the screen editor, so you can design your own levels to your heart's content. (NB Not all of these passwords worked on our pre-production version of the game, but they should be okay for the real thing).

1 - WELCOME



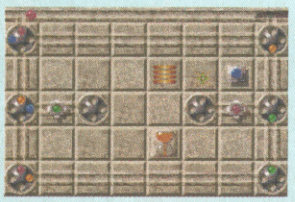
2 - THE OTHER SIDE

3 - QUADRI QUADRA



4 - STONE ROAD

5 - NICE COLORS



6 - MORE COLORS

7 - REAL FUN

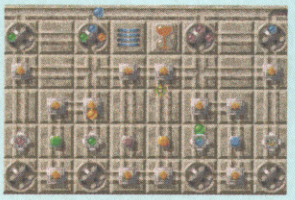
8 - PINK AND PINK

9 - GREEN PATH

10 - BAD DIRECTION

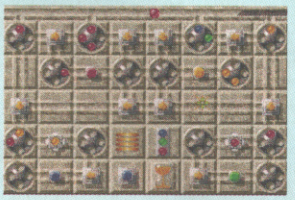
11 - DONT PANIC

12 - COLORMANIA



13 - REFRESHMENT

14 - FULL MOON



15 - RUNNING BALLS

16 - GREEN RIVER

17 - TWO ISLANDS

18 - MORE ISLANDS

19 - TIMES CHANGE

20 - OTHER THINGS

21 - BE HONEST

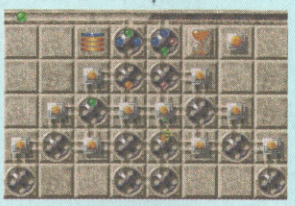
22 - BLUE N VIOLET

23 - THREE PATHS

24 - DANGEROUS

25 - THE WANDERER

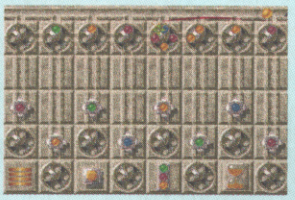
26 - SECRET CHAMBER



27 - FALCONS FLIGHT

28 - BLUE ANGEL

29 - FAR THUNDER



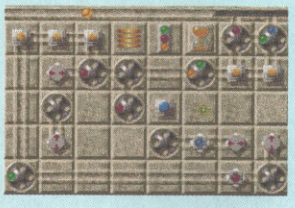
30 - A SIMPLE ONE

31 - BLUE VELVET

32 - PARADISE I

33 - CLASSIC ART

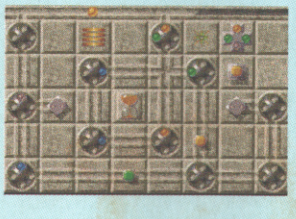
34 - VENI VIDI VICI



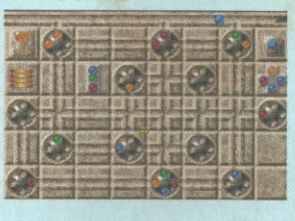
35 - WE LIKE IT

36 - FOREVER HERE

37 - WONDERLAND



38 - THE SNARE

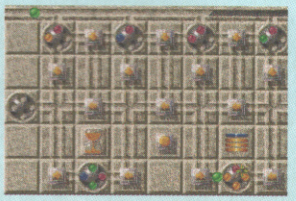


39 - CURE IT

40 - SUN IS SHINING

41 - A RAINBOW

42 - ARROW ROAD



43 - TURNING WHEELS

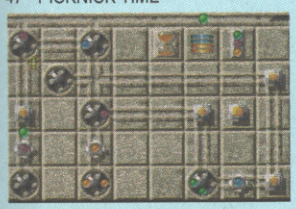
AL

44 - ACCELERATION

45 - THE PRESIDENT

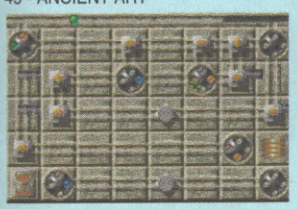
46 - HE IS MISSING

47 - PICKNICK TIME



48 - WHO IS CALLING

49 - ANCIENT ART



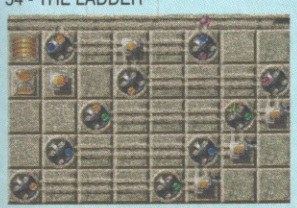
50 - SHE IS GONE

51 - LOGISTIC

52 - TURNING COLORS

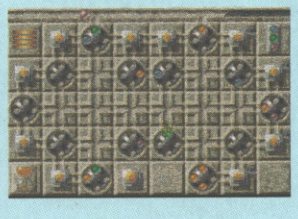
53 - PARAMOUNT

54 - THE LADDER



55 - BACK IN RED

56 - TREASURE ROOM



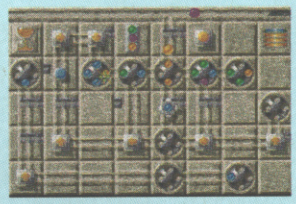
57 - DONT WANT THAT

58 - THE FREE FALL

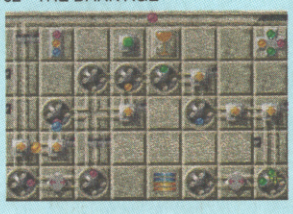
59 - CORRADO BEACH

60 - MORE POPCORN

61 - WILD AT HEART



62 - THE DARK AGE

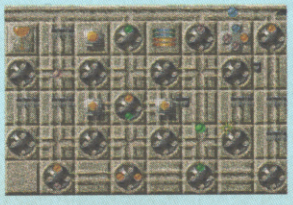


63 - DIMLIGHTS

64 - THE FIFTIES

65 - PICTURE OF HER

66 - GORDIAN KNOT



67 - HIGH SPEED

68 - ALEXANDRIA

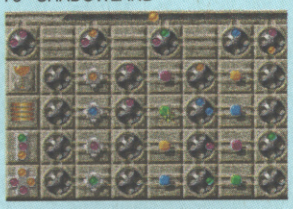
69 - RUNNING TEARS

70 - HER RAINBOW

71 - WALK IN CREAM

72 - TOUCH HER

73 - SHADOWLAND

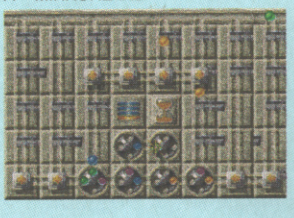


74 - JACK IN BAG

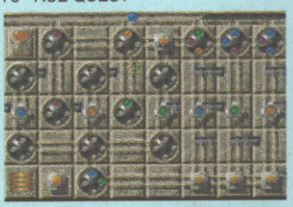
75 - VITAMIN C

76 - STUNT BALL

77 - MIRRORLAND



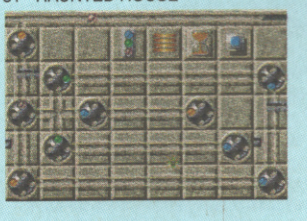
78 - ACE QUEST



79 - BOA BOA BOA

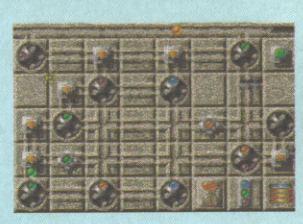
80 - DA DA DA

81 - HAUNTED HOUSE



82 - THE SECRETS

83 - SMILING JOKE



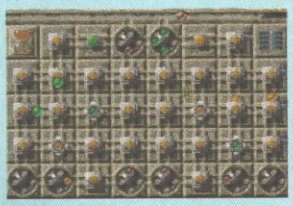
84 - CHILDREN GO

85 - IT IS ATLANTIS

86 - ON THE ROAD

87 - BLUE IS FIRST

88 - WOLFS MOON



89 - WILD CHINA

90 - ITS LOGICAL

91 - SHE COMPARES

92 - BIG MOUNTAINS

93 - TOMORROW

94 - TELEPORTER JAM

95 - LEVER SUNLIGHT

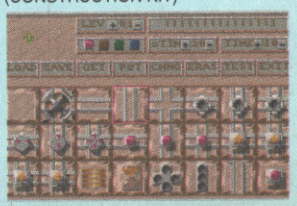
96 - NEW EXODUS

97 - THE PEACEPIPE

98 - FINAL SURPRISE

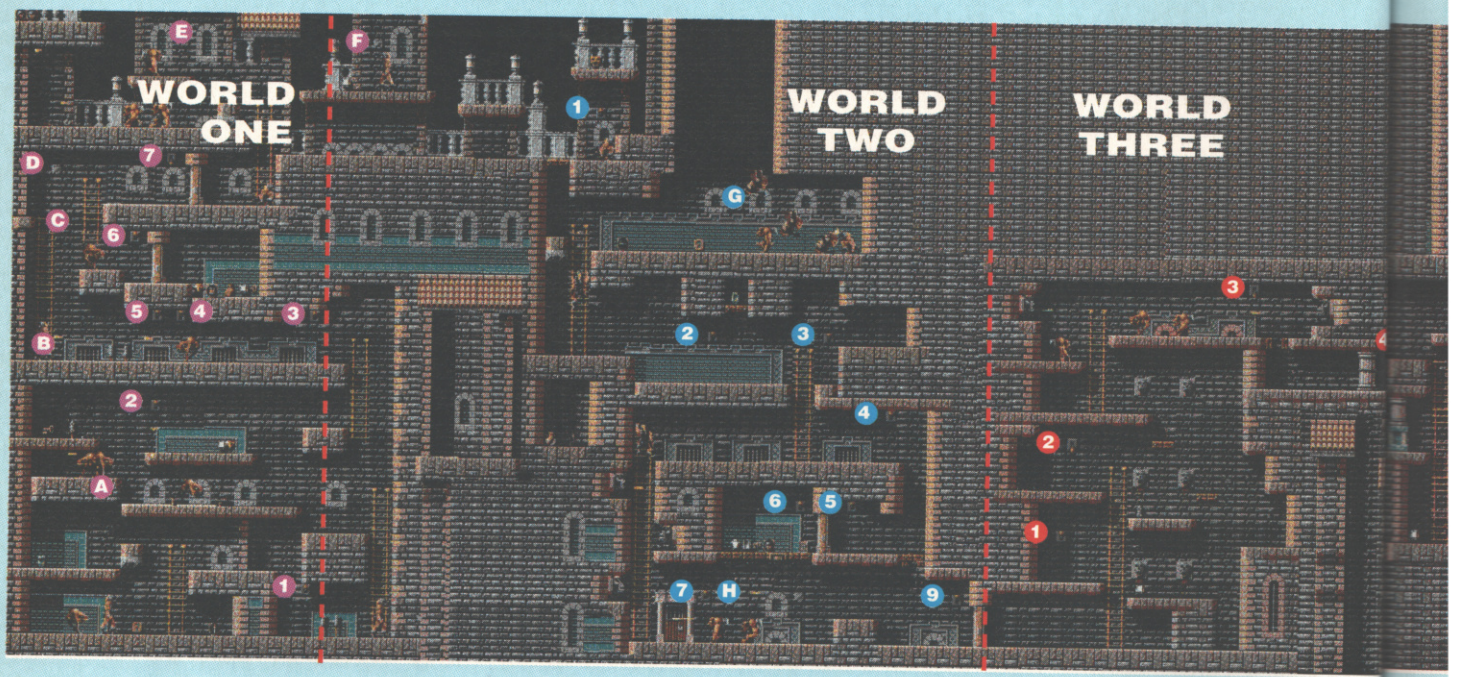
99 - WHITE MIAMI

100 - THE FINAL CUT
(CONSTRUCTION KIT)



GODS

Who better to bring you the AMIGA POWER guide to the Bitmaps' *Gods* than Bitmap Brother Eric Matthews? This month, level one. Take it away, Eric...



General Advice

Gods is split into four levels with each level containing three 'worlds'.

There is more than one way to complete each world and no world needs to be fully completed to finish the game. There are many hidden puzzles and sections which do not need to be solved but which can provide rewards.

The difficulty level should gradually increase from level one to level four. If you come across a section in the game which seems particularly difficult to complete this may be an indication that there is no need to complete the section to finish the game. Such difficult areas are generally 'bonus' sections which if completed will reward you with treasure. Some worlds have 'short cuts' which enable the level to be completed quickly but you may lose out on treasure and other bonuses by taking them. It is up to you to experiment with the game to find out what is best to do.

Monsters

In *Gods*, all monsters have attributes that define their strengths, weakness and behaviour. The attribute which sets how many times a monster must be hit before it dies is called the aliens 'hit point' attribute. A weak (low hit point) monster would have perhaps ten hit points where a stronger monster could have two hundred and fifty or more.

As you progress through the game you will notice that the monsters become more intelligent. This means that they will be more effective at carrying out their objectives, to either kill you, avoid you or steal treasure. In general it is not wise to attack thieves as they are usually helpful.

Weapons

Weapons also have attributes which define their behaviour and effectiveness. The weapons 'hit point' score determines how powerful it is. For example, to kill a monster with twenty hit points would require twenty throws of a one hit point weapon (such as a knife) or four throws of a five hit point weapon (such as a fireball). Obviously, with weapons, the higher the 'hit point' rating the better.

A weapon can either stop when it hits a monster or travel through it. Weapons which can travel through monsters are more effective as the weapon might do even more damage to another monster behind the first. Also weapons which go through monsters cause more damage to each monster. This ability of weapons should be taken into account when choosing the right weapon. For example, in a situation where you are firing at three monsters in a line, a throwing star (two hit points) will be much more effective than a mace (three hit points). This is because the throwing star will do at least two hit points damage to each alien (a total of six plus) where the mace will only achieve three hit points damage in total.

The third characteristic which should be taken into account when selecting weapons is whether or not the weapon collides with walls when it is thrown. Weapons which go past walls are more effective. The value of the weapon reflects its usefulness.

Potions

Correct use of potions can be helpful in completing many sections of the game. Because you can usually only carry three items in the inventory it is not always wise to buy too many potions in the shop as there will then be no room for carrying other objects that may be necessary for solving the puzzles.

If you are familiar with the section of the game after the shop, try and think ahead and plan which potions would be most useful and where you would be most likely to use them. Then you can decide how many potions it is safe to buy without risking having to drop a potion when you don't want to.

POTION GUIDE

Potion Type	Description	Value
Chicken	restores energy	00650
Apple	restores energy	01,000
Weapon arc	standard	01,000
Weapon arc	intense	01,000
Weapon arc	wide	01,000
Bread	restores energy	01,300
Small health	restores energy	04,000
Magic potion	freezes aliens	04,000
Shield	invulnerability	05,000
Magic wings	effects familiar	05,000
Power potion	increases weapon	06,000
Large health	restores energy	08,000
Starburst		10,000
Power claws	effects familiar	10,000
Power potion	increases weapon	12,000
Shield	reduces damage	20,000
Extra life		20,000
Familiar		30,000

Power Potions

Power potions are used to increase the effectiveness of weapons. Buying or picking up a power potion increases the damage done by ALL of your weapons. A weapon that is powered up once will have one extra hit point and fire in two directions. A weapon that is powered up twice will have two extra hit points and fire in three directions. After being powered up twice, weapons continue increasing in hit points each time you get another power potion.

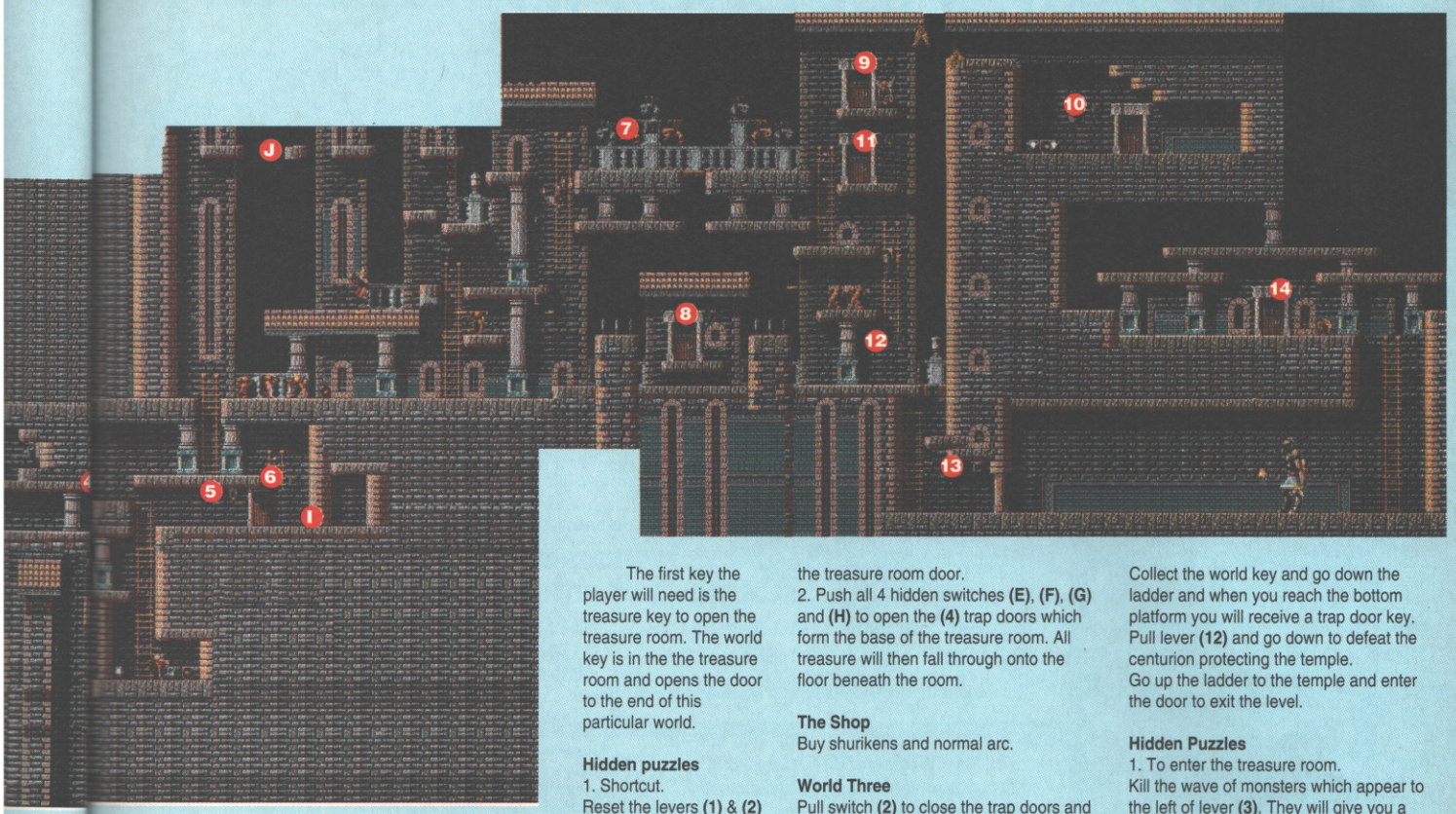
Small power potions power up weapons once. Large power potions power up weapons twice. The same effect can be achieved by picking up or buying multiples of the same weapon. For example, buying an axe and a large power potion is the equivalent of buying three axes.

Considering that power potions affect all the weapons, they are a far more economical way of increasing weapon hit points than buying multiples of the same weapon. *(See separate potions panel).*

In level two, three and four the power-ups increase in value to 17,500 for a small and 32,000 a large.

Extra Lives

Extra lives are plentiful in *Gods*. They can be found in treasure rooms but they can also be awarded for clever play and for scoring points. It's simply a matter of experimentation. Extra lives can also be given to help a player who happens to be doing badly (they'll just show up if things are getting real nasty). And there are special tasks with extra lives as reward.



Extra lives are awarded for points at the following milestones: 50,000 points, 160,000 points, 300,000 points, 500,000 points, and then every 200,000 points. Fire Chrystals (*sic*) are also awarded for scoring points. These are given at the following scores: 100,000 points, 250,000 points, 400,000 points, 600,000 points, and then every 200,000 points. These bonuses only apply when playing from the start of the game (level one).

If you use a password to start from another level then bonuses will be missed equivalent to the number of levels skipped. For instance, starting at level three, your first extra life will be at 300,000 points and your first fire chrystal will be awarded at 400,000 points.

Treasure	Value
Pile of coins	00002
Chrystal	00075
Jewel	00150
Small bag of gold	00200
Large bag of gold	00400
Gold plate	00400
Necklace	00500
Diamond	00500
Gold mask	00800
Water chrystal	01,000
Fire chrystal	01,500
Iron treasure chest	01,000
Steel treasure chest	02,000
Gold treasure chest	03,000

World One

As is often the case, the first world of the game is used to enable the player to get used to the control method and to solve some pretty simple puzzles – nothing overtly challenging to worry about.

The first key the player will need is the treasure key to open the treasure room. The world key is in the the treasure room and opens the door to the end of this particular world.

Hidden puzzles

1. Shortcut.
Reset the levers **(1)** & **(2)** to move block **(A)**. This will reveal a water chrystal and power-up and teleport the player to **(B)**.
2. Special bonus.
The second puzzle is progressive, in the sense that the by finding one hidden puzzle the player will then be able to find the next. There are four parts to the puzzle.
a. Blow up the trap with lever **(4)** an then pull lever **(3)** to reveal an iron treasure chest.
b. Reset lever **(4)** and pull lever **(5)** to get a fire chrystal.
c. Pull lever **(7)** within 2 mins. from game start to make platform **(C)** move.
d. Press hidden switch **(D)** to get the fire chrystal.
e. Finding these four puzzles will mean that you can find the final part of the puzzle in World Two.

World Two

Get the trap door key on the left of the screen to open the trap door on the right. Make sure that you go over the top platforms as the bottom route is more difficult but will give you bonus chrystal. Collect the vase and take it to the stores at the bottom of the map, making sure that you collect the room key on the way. Get the world key from stores to exit on the right.

Hidden Puzzles

To get to the treasure room.
1. Kill the monsters on the ledge to the right of lever **(3)** to receive a trap door key. This will let you close the trap door above lever **(9)** by pulling lever **(4)**. You will then be able to jump down and open the treasure room door.
2. Push all 4 hidden switches **(E)**, **(F)**, **(G)** and **(H)** to open the **(4)** trap doors which form the base of the treasure room. All treasure will then fall through onto the floor beneath the room.

The Shop

Buy shurikens and normal arc.

World Three

Pull switch **(2)** to close the trap doors and blow up the spike in the pit.
Get the giant jump and jump up the trap doors (alternatively you can wait for two minutes and a teleport chrystal will appear to move you up, although you will not get the special bonus).
Get the trapdoor key on the top left platform to open the trap door to the right.
Go up the ladder which lead up to the towers.
Go up the ladders to the bridge and jump across the platforms to the left to collect the trap door key.
Go right and collect the teleport key.
Open the door by pulling lever **(11)** and this will teleport you to the platform on the far left of the map.
Collect the door key.
Go right and pull lever **(7)** and drop down through the trap door.
Pull lever **(8)** to teleport you to the top door on the right.
Pull lever **(9)** to enter the treasure room and collect the lightning bolt.
Pulling lever **(10)** will open the door and take you back.
Collect the world key and go down the ladder and when you reach the bottom platform you will receive a trap door key.
Pull lever **(12)** and go down to defeat the centurion protecting the temple.
Go up the ladder to the temple and enter the door to exit the level.

Hidden Puzzles

1. To enter the treasure room.
Kill the wave of monsters which appear to the left of lever **(3)**. They will give you a trap key. Reset lever **(3)** and which will then give you a shield when you pull lever **(4)** to protect you when you drop through the trap door to the treasure room.
2. To move block **(I)**.
You have to get to this point with more than 2 lives, and more than 80,000 points and within 140 secs. from the start of this world.
3. Special bonus.
Kill the Centurion without collecting the lightning bolt. You will then receive a gold treasure chest.

The Centurion Boss guy

Watch the Centurion as he throws out fireballs and note the point where they bounce the highest. This is the place you should stand to kill the Boss without getting hit. Move backwards and forwards at the same time as the Centurion.

Shop

In the shop you should buy the Magic Axe and spend the rest of your money on Power Potions.

WEAPONS GUIDE

Weapon Type	Cost	HP	Stop on Walls	Stop on Aliens
Knife	02,500	1	YES	YES
Throwing star	05,000	2	YES	NO
Mace	07,500	3	YES	YES
Axe	10,000	4	NO	NO
Fireball	12,500	5	YES	YES
Hunter	15,000	5	NO	YES
Magic axe	15,000	3	YES	YES
Spear	17,500	6	NO	NO
Time bomb	20,000	20	NO	NO
Lightning bolt	30,000	25	NO	NO

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AMIGA POWER PRESENTS

THE ULTIMATE AUTUMN GAME GUIDE

As everyone knows, summer's a dead time for games. That's why the big software houses are releasing pitifully few A-grade products over the June-August period – games players are meant to be out playing football and chasing girls rather than sitting hunched over their computers. No, the big, exciting releases are all being saved for autumn, 1991's peak release period. Come September we'll have big name licences, original concepts and top creative teams coming out of our ears, so what better time to settle back, put your feet up, and dream about things to come? It all starts right here...

So how does the **AMIGA POWER** Ultimate Autumn Preview work? Well, quite simply, we've selected around 60 full-price titles that'll be making the news over the coming weeks. This little lot represents the bulk of the major league games on offer during the months of September, October and November, each one scrabbling for its slice of the market. All the big names are here, plus a few unlikely selections (and a fair smattering of games originally intended for spring release now held over for the autumn boom), so there should be something for every taste. If you're thinking of splashing out for all the games on offer though, take a deep breath. Your total bill for the software featured over the next 10 pages would be in the region of £1,800!

THE SIMPSONS

Publisher: Ocean
Programmers: Arc Developments, perhaps best known for arcade and film conversions like *Predator II* and *Forgotten Worlds*.
ETA: Mid-September

Briefly: No surprise that cartoon phenomenon *The Simpsons* should appear in their own computer game. Little shock that it's Ocean who've got the licence either – after all, much of their success is based on similar clever deals. Make no mistake – lots of cash and legal wrangling have gone towards bringing you this game.

Plot-wise things are fairly vague. Top Simpson Bart has come over all queer and turned himself into a conscientious member of the Springfield community – he's decided to protect his long suffering neighbours from the perils of the modern world, the most obvious of which are (uh-oh!) aliens who've dropped in for a spot of human munching! The problem is, nobody else has the faintest clue what's going on because (and here's the special bit) Bart's the only one with a pair of X-Ray specs allowing him to spot the aliens through their human disguises. Or at least, so he claims...

Ocean have done enough sideways scrolling blasters (for that's what it all boils down to) to know what they're doing here, and you can rely on other members of the infamous Simpson family to make suitable appearances. There's even a topical environmental message – Bart says 'Save the world, man'.

On the upside: Cynics may fear *The Simpsons* will turn out to be a load of old hogwash slopped together in an entirely unpleasant attempt to extract dollars from dimbos (remember the *Turtles*?), but there's something they've forgotten. You see, *Simpsons* creator Matt Groening designed the original Nintendo console version, and has insisted on a veto on the Ocean game himself – after all, he's not going to want public interest in Bart and Co to be cheapened by shoddy merchandising.

So, if Groening likes it, there's a fair chance we will. And with Ocean's track record in this field, and the fact that the game designers have actually thought of giving an objective and a story to the thing (they've been forgotten before), hopes are currently held quite high.

On the downside: Given the high profile of the character, and the fact that this is THE licence tie-in of the season, it's easy to be tempted into expecting too much. Remember, it'll be a sideways scrolling romp, it'll be lots of fun, but it won't be winning any awards for originality.

The other, more serious problem, is one of timing. Ocean haven't had their normally efficient act together this year, and product after product has been inexcusably late. The question has to be asked, will we really see the Simpsons this autumn – or even this year? – at all?

What're its chances? We are prepared to take bets at extremely generous odds that – presuming Groening is impressed — this baby is going straight to Number One.

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

Publisher: Ocean
Programmers: Twylight (also doing 8-bit versions of *Darkman*).
ETA: October

Briefly: Anyone who has recently found themselves welded to a Sky receiving kit will know all about the antics of these American wrestling chumps. Here's your chance to become – if that's the right word – Hulk Hogan, Ultimate Warrior or British Bulldog.

On the upside: It actually has a lot going for it – it's a cult sport with a huge following, it's packed with colourful characters, and it has the requisite violence quotient fitted as standard. All in all, ideal materal for a computer game.

On the downside: Some people find all that grunting, groaning and man-handling just a tiny tad ridiculous.

What're its chances? We're in real meat-head territory here. A winner.

SMASH TV

Publisher: Ocean
Programmers: Probe
ETA: November

Briefly: Long awaited coin-op conversion based on vicious game show of the future. Essentially, you're stuck in close combat with fancy high–tech weaponry on both sides. We're being told that this makes 'War of the Worlds look like carnival day in Notty Ash' and are warned to expect 'total carnage'. Yeah, like we're really quivering with fear...

On the upside: Prime conversion material, with grandiose intro sequences, 50 different arenas, loads of guns, hunky graphics, sampled arcade speech and optional game-view variables – basically, the whole caboodle. This conversion is actually being handled by ZZKJ, previously responsible *Super Hang-On* and *Super Monaco GP*, which hopefully eliminate any problems with the fact that...

On the downside: ...there's a hell of a lot happening in the original, and that's not going to be too easy to duplicate.

What're its chances? If Probe fouls up there really will be trouble. Still, we don't expect them to. →

WIZKID

Publisher: Ocean
Programmers: Sensible Software, authors of the famous *Wizball* (of course).
ETA: October

***Wizkid*: Totally surreal sequel to the huge cult hit *Wizball*.**

Briefly: Sequel to the phenomenally successful *Wizball* of a few years ago. Control a bouncing head through a surreal and colourful multi-platform world picking up mad treasures, solving infuriating puzzles and generally making progress. This time the 'ball' can grow arms and legs for extra challenging levels.

On the upside: We're talking 12 levels each with over 100 screens. Sensible can normally be relied upon to come up with a few off-the-wall effects.

On the downside: Sequel-mania goes on, but who's complaining?

What're its chances? If the quality matches that of its predecessor, then it could be massive. Major innovations on the original could make this a real treat.

SPORTS ACTION RUGBY

Publisher: Audiogenic
Programmers: Denton Design, regular Audiogenic programming team last responsible for *Wreckers*.
ETA:: October

Briefly: Yes, it's a rugby game, featuring both action and strategy bits. The first of a new TV Sports-style series from Audiogenic.

On the upside: There aren't many rugby games about...

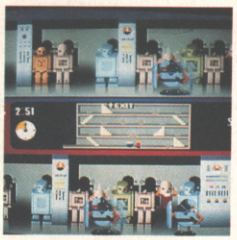
On the downside: ...but that's because they're usually so bad. Rugby certainly isn't the sexiest sport for conversion.

What're its chances? *Sports Action Rugby* will be launched to coincide with the Rugby World Cup (in which the home countries are expected to perform well) which should help boost its profile. We're hoping it'll be the first rugby game that's actually worth playing, but keep an eye out for Domark's *World Class Rugby* too which, the firm claims, will be 'like *Kick Off*' when it arrives this October.

Hype and gory: Rugger's World Cup has kicked off an Amiga games chase.

BONANZA BROS

Publisher: US Gold
Programmers: Tiertex
ETA: November



Play for laughs: *Bonanza Bros* (Sega version)

Briefly: Sideways view arcade adventure featuring two amusing brothers from the school of absolute villainy. Our lads have decided to break into famous people's houses and steal back all the dodgy kit that's been deposited over the years. Naturally, this isn't to the taste of innumerable security guards and home-owners. Prepare to be chased by men with big sticks...

On the upside: Your chance to nick every television set in Beverly Hills. The coin-op's unusual computer-generated graphics system looks distinctive...

On the downside: ...but how well will it translate onto the Amiga? US Gold are using the word 'comical' to hype this, which is always a bad sign.

What're its chances? Any game which doesn't involve saving the earth from pollution/ rescuing some lush chick gets our vote.

THE GODFATHER

THE ACTION GAME & THE ADVENTURE GAME

SIM EARTH

Sim Earth: Games don't get much bigger, but will it be fun?

Publisher: Ocean
Programmers: Maxis, the creators of *Sim City*, did the PC original, but the Amiga version's down to Probe.
ETA: November

Briefly: Remember controlling an urban sprawl in *Sim City*? You certainly should – the game's an all-time Amiga classic for its charm, its usability, it's cleverness and – yes! – its originality. Now designers Maxis, with the help of Probe, have gone one bigger – well, actually a whole lot bigger – with an evolution simulation of the world.

You control emerging lifeforms from outrageously witless amoebas to just plain common-or-garden witless humans. It's a huge point and click journey through countless problems and puzzles testing both common sense and higher forms of intellectual prowess. If your lifeforms are crap, they'll die of one of dozens of causes (self destruction, disease, that kind of thing), and even if they're happening organisms, you're in for a rough ride. Games certainly don't get much bigger than this.

On the upside: It's probably one of the most ambitious projects yet to be undertaken on the Amiga and we have to take a tip-top programming job as read if the game's to succeed. The PC version has been around for six months and has enjoyed success among the sort of games players who had hitherto been satisfied with computer chess, war strategy and flight sims. National newspapers even got their hooks into *Sim Earth*, with many stories appearing along the lines of games finally 'growing up'. It's not the sort of thing Ocean specialise in publishing, and it has to be seen as some sort of high-end flagship for them.

On the downside: We've played the PC version and, it must be said, it's far from perfect. It's difficult to get into and it has a tendency to come across as a lot of dull environmental sermonising. Fun is most certainly not the keyword here – it's unlikely to be anywhere near as accessible as the excellent *Sim City*.

What're its chances? It looks good simply to have on your shelves, even if you never quite get round to playing it. For that reason alone it will do well, and while it's unlikely to reach the top end of the charts, we're willing to bet that copies of *Sim Earth* will still be passing over the counter at your local computer store at the end of '92.

Publisher: US Gold
Programmers: Creative Materials (action game) and Delphine (adventure version).
ETA: September

Briefly: Take 10 hours worth of *Godfather* movies and you should've copped plenty of opportunities for arcade-style action sequences (quite how they can be linked together into a pleasing game is another matter, however). Expect plenty of severed heads, gratuitous murder and massive scale back-street slaughter. The adventure version is perhaps a more obvious bet – linking Mafia intrigue with Delphine's successful Cinematique system could be a winner.

On the upside: The rich, swirling and incident-filled *Godfather* backdrop should add a good deal of depth to the action game, while the adventure has almost limitless potential – it just depends how on well they manage to tap it.

On the downside: They're big projects but we've heard very little about progress. The adventure game is a particular mystery – just how will it make sense of such a complex plot? It'll take some clever game design work, that's for sure.

What're its chances? The notion of *Godfather* games is an excellent one, but we'll reserve judgement until we know more.

Plenty of scope for a cracking game in *The Godfather*.

FINAL FIGHT

Publisher: US Gold
Programmers: Creative Materials
ETA: October

***Final Fight*: Formularised fight scenes with extra moves to your advantage**

Briefly: Classic inner city CapCom coin-op beat-'em-up starring a motley crew of street gangs and psychopaths. Two player simultaneous option, 32 colours, huge sprites, Japanese style graphics – what more could you ask for?

On the upside: The arcade original is probably one of the best in this still popular genre.

On the downside: But the whole ultra-violence martial arts thing has been done zillions of times before.

What're its chances? Creative Materials seem to be doing good things with the project – hopes have to be high for an Autumn smash.

SUPER SPACE INVADERS

Publisher: Domark
Programmers: In-house
ETA: November

Briefly: The nastiest (and firstest) bad guys in the galaxy are back, bleeping and blooping their way earthwards. Your job? Simply enjoy the death-fest.

On the upside: Simple unpretentious fun is always a winner and this should capture an appealing B-Movie tongue-in-cheek feel. The coin-op original featured all sorts of weird stuff – including invaders on a mission to steal earth cows! – so expect more than a straight and humourless waste-'em–all.

On the downside: A nice idea as a one-off, but let's hope the release schedules don't start getting clogged up with nostalgic updates of prehistoric game styles. Hopefully the basic gameplay won't simply feel too thin to warrant serious consideration in 1991.

What're its chances? *Super Space Invaders* made a respectable impression in the arcades, and most expect a similar performance on the Amiga.

RACE DRIVIN'

Publisher: Domark
Programmers: Walking Circles
ETA: November

Briefly: First there was *Hard Drivin'* (which was sort of OK), then there was *Hard Drivin' II* (which wasn't so OK). Now there's *Race Drivin'*, apparently the official sequel to *Hard Drivin'* as opposed to the unofficial sequel. Oh dear, it's all very confusing. Anyway, this one features three different tracks containing loads of loops, hoops and corkscrews to zoom around. One of the tracks is the same as in *Hard Drivin'*, one's ridiculously challenging, and the third is just plain tough.

On the upside: Good programmers in charge of converting a good coin-op.

On the downside: Neither previous home game captured the thrills of the coin-op sufficiently, mainly due to shaky updates and a lack of speed, and there's a danger that the same will apply here. The new game's got to feel different to the other two also – what's →

the point in buying the same thing three times?

What're its chances? The whole *Hard Drivin'* concept ran out of steam some while ago – it's going to take quite some game to rekindle a decent-sized level of interest.

MiG-29M SUPER FULCRUM

Publisher: Domark
Programmers: Simis, last responsible for (spook!) the original *MiG-29*.
ETA: September

Briefly: Follow up to the highly successful MiG simulation of earlier this year using much of the same code. This is based on a completely new piece of kit which is due to be unveiled at the Paris Air Show.

On the upside: Expect plenty of variety in gameplay – this isn't just a list of standard missions to complete. You'll be playing in a global scenario, so actions over which you have no control will drastically alter battle plans. The plane's different too – most noticeably the full 360° view bubble canopy.

On the downside: Might be disappointing for strict flight sim enthusiasts who expect absolute parity with the real aircraft. Nobody's going to believe Domark have full tech specs on a Soviet fighter which has yet to be launched – they'll have had to take even more artistic licence than is usual with flight sims.

What're its chances? Polished and professional flight sims always do well, and (judging by Simis' past performance) this should be worth a look. Not likely to chart top though, as the game will be sold as both a mission disk for existing *MiG-29* owners and a stand-alone product so sales will be split.

PIT FIGHTER

Publisher: Domark
Programmers: The London branch of Teque, the conversion specialists.
ETA: October

Briefly: Pure brutality whisked this straight to the pinnacle of coin-op coolness last year (it was Atari's fastest selling arcade machine ever). No plot as such, just a rabid scrap between chunky characters who get down to wrestling, kickboxing →

CRUISE FOR A CORPSE

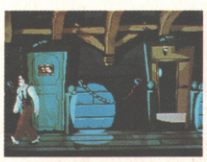
Publisher: Delphine (US Gold)
Programmers: Delphine's adventure games team, who of course had previous success with the similar *Future Wars* and *Operation Stealth*.
ETA: September

Sharp detective work and plenty of snooping is required in Delphine's *Cruise For A Corpse*.

Briefly: It's time to don silly moustache and implausible continental accent and go looking for a murderer in this Sunday night, Agatha Christie TV-movie of an adventure. You, as a Hercule Poirot-type character, strut around a luxury cruiser (circa 1920) being charming yet enigmatic until your host (a Greek shipping magnate) takes a trip to that great tax dodge in the sky. Is there a world famous detective on-board? As luck would have it...

It's not all plain sailing in *Cruise For A Corpse*.

On the upside: Delphine uses a trade-marked operating system for its point and click graphical adventures called Cinematique, and it's actually rather good. *Future Wars* and *Operation Stealth* were neat (and both Top 100 games) and *Corpse* promises to be an improvement on both, providing plenty of characters to interview and a labyrinthine plot to fill those long, um, autumn evenings.



Character interaction may be an integral part of *Cruise For A Corpse*, but it's the graphics which really impress.

On the downside: Cinematique might be good, but let's face it – nothing done on it so far comes close to being as funny or user friendly as Lucasfilm's current adventure system. The game will be undeniably good, but the improvement will have to be large for it to truly compete with the likes of *Monkey Island*. Also, we've been waiting a long time for this one, it should have been out last year. Delphine have something of a reputation for being late.

What're its chances? Definitely a no go area for anyone who likes their action thick and fast, but bound to do well with the older gamer.

Interviewing techniques have been the downfall of many a game. Will *Cruise* fare any better?

WILD WHEELS

Wild Wheels: High hopes for something out of the ordinary.

Publisher: Ocean
Programmers: Red Rat, the Manchester-based team behind games like *Lombard RAC Rally* and MicroProse *International Soccer Challenge*.
ETA: October

Briefly: It's soccer on wheels in multidirectional 3D land. There are 10 different vehicles to choose from and plenty of opportunity to bang them into one another. Red Rat reckon they've come up with an original idea and are keen to dispel any fears that this will come across as just another football game but without the legs. Some elements of strategy are being thrown in, so teams are made up of customised cars suited to differing tasks.

On the upside: A smart combination of beat-'em-up, strategy, racing, sports and standard shoot-'em up. Sprites are huge and move easily. Red Rat's track record suggests they know exactly where their strengths lie.

On the downside: Football games with strange angles are invariably useless which is why Red Rat are desperate to play down this label. A spokesman commented: 'It's not just a football game with cars – it's a wild, crazy, fun game which looks great.'

What're its chances? Red Rat have been around for eight years banging out bright, though not sparkling games. Hopes must be high that this'll be the one to really put them on the map.

ALIEN STORM

Publisher: US Gold
Programmers: Tiertex
ETA: September

You know what to expect from *Alien Storm* (Sega screenshot). Psuedo 3D *Battlezone* at its best.

Briefly: Oops! Some chap has let loose a million and one man eating alien slime suckers, and they're taking the overnight shuttle straight to their favourite takeaway spot, Planet Earth! What's the solution? Well, why not dust down some uncommonly large *Ghostbusters*-style guns and give these fellas a good seeing to? *Alien Storm* was an exceptional coin-op which proved virtually impossible to leave alone.

On the upside: Horrible aliens and lots and lots of shooting.

On the downside: It's about as intelligent as a Pit Bull that's just guzzled fifteen pints of Special Brew, through a straw.

What're its chances? Said qualities ensure massive success.

TURTLES 2 - THE ARCADE GAME

Publisher: Image Works
Programmers: Probe, who did the (actually rather good) 8-bit versions of *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles.*
ETA: November

Briefly: It was a smash-hit as a coin-op and for good reason. There are plenty of the tricks and effects which made the *Turtles* popular in the first place. Image Works are already proclaiming that the Amiga version of this all-action beat-'em-up will be 'identical' to the coin-op.

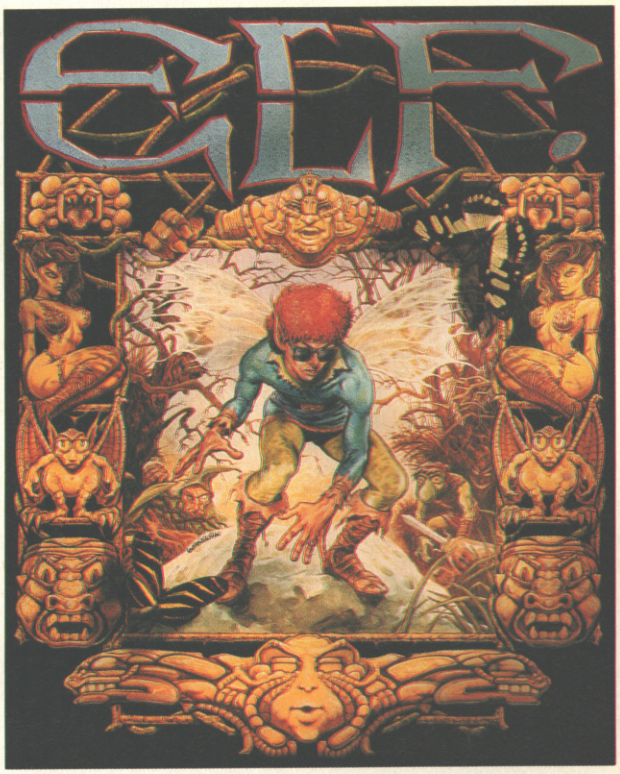
On the upside: A wonderful coin-op. Probe will be working flat out to turn this into the definitive conversion.

On the downside: 16-bit versions of the first Turtles game have left a bad taste in the mouth. Youngsters around the country think the *Turtles* are passé already...

What's its chances? ...although we reckon quality of gameplay will be the essential ingredient this time around. Another potential Number One.

Turtle power: Don't sniff at this brutal beat-'em-up.

ELF



***Elf*: Nirvana's bottom-of-the-garden debut has attracted enormous interest.**

Publisher: Ocean
Programmers: Nirvana Systems, a new programming team making their professional 16-bit debut.
ETA: September

Briefly: A colourful and gardenesque platform arcade adventure with plenty of bad guys, a cute mixture of useful objects to collect, and an assortment of harmless characters to make use of. Shades of Ocean's hit coin-op conversion *Rainbow Islands* in the look and feel, with plenty of platforms and teasing puzzles plus 'a host of delightful graphical tricks not yet exploited in similar games'.

On the upside: Good arcade adventures are always fun, and ingenious, unusual ones (as this promises to be) more welcome than most. *Elf* certainly looks attractive and has gained much favourable pre-publicity.

On the downside: *Elf* is Nirvana Systems' first effort (they're all straight out of university) so while we can expect something different, it's highly likely that mistakes will be made. The game was to have been ready last month but has since been put back to September, and the quality of *Elf's* sound is said to be somewhat short of ideal.

What're its chances? Remarkably good. The Nirvana kids are admittadly an unknown quantity, but the fact that it's Ocean who have signed these guys (and the fact that *Elf* isn't a licence tie-in of any sort) would seem to bode well.

Ocean get back to the cute end of the market with an original product. *Elf* is certainly easy on the eyes. How it plays remains to be seen.

and karate, not to mention using shurikens, knives, barstools and even motorcycles as weapons!

On the upside: Absolute royalty as far as coin-ops go. Teque London have been instructed to recapture the fore and aft dimension of the impressive digitised coin-op fighters in the Amiga version. Big sprites, nice noises, and there's a damn good buzz about the project.

On the downside: Gameplay in the arcade version wouldn't have held up well without the distraction of the flashy visuals. Lacking the coin-op's gorgeousness, this could cause a serious problem for the home versions of the game.

What're its chances? Should be one of the big coin-op based hits of the second half of the year.

OUTRUN EUROPA

Publisher: US Gold
Programmers: Probe, who have more conversions than we've room to mention under their various belts, though *Turbo OutRun, Golden Axe* and (eek!) the surprisingly good 8-bit versions of *Turtles* spring to mind.
ETA: September

Briefly: Seven stage race across Europe in everything from jet skis to lush Porsche 911s to 170 mph Yamaha GP motorbikes. Not a coin-op conversion, but US Gold's own, slightly off-the-wall, spin-off interpretation of the original game, it offers plenty of scrapes with such lovelies as unfriendly policemen, secret agents and international terrorists.

On the upside: Lots of potential for a more varied race game than most. This version of *Outrun Europa* is very different to the one put together by Probe in 1989, featured in many magazines, but never released.

On the downside: The original *OutRun* coin-op was so good it set itself as the de facto standard in racing games, but although home versions hit number one spots the conversions left a great deal to be desired.

What're its chances? If Probe gets this right it will be a winner. It should at the very least be amusing, at best lots of fun and a big hit. (If no MP decides it encourages racing on public roads, that is). →

ROBOCOD

Publisher: Millennium
Programmer: Chris Sorrell (*James Pond*)
ETA: November

Briefly: Another cutesy platform game with an environmental message, and the follow up to the surprise hit *James Pond*. This time it's out of the deep putrid sea and onto the earth to chase a dirty old scientist with designs on world domination.

On the upside: Perfectly reasonable of Millennium to milk some more from the remarkable *James Pond* success. Expect plenty of new ideas superimposed on an old game-style.

On the downside: Yes, it's that age-old sequel grumble again.

What're its chances? Probably won't repeat *James Pond*'s advances.

FOOTBALL X

(Working Title)

Publisher: Krisalis
Programmers: In-house
ETA: October

Briefly: Standard football management affair featuring all four English leagues and the Vauxhall Conference. Some 1,300 players are packed in, plus the likelihood of an endorsement from a senior football league manager. Smart money is currently on George Graham, Terry Venables or Alex Ferguson.

On the upside: Krisalis made a hugely impressive job of its *Manchester United* game, so we can hope for something of quality. The firm says this will be a management game for 'the quality end' of the market.

On the downside: There are far too many of these games as it is, and most of them are dire.

What're its chances? There are so many sports management games out there each new one will succeed or fail on its own merits. (Fingers crossed that this'll be worth booting up...)

LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE 2

Publisher: Gremlin
Programmers: Magnetic Fields, who seem to have become real driving game specialists following *Supercars* and the first *Lotus*.
ETA: October

→

FLAG

Publisher: Gremlin
Programmers: Ian Harling (the man behind Ocean's *Lost Patrol*) and Simon Cook.
ETA: November

Briefly: If you imagine a rather cartoonish distant nephew of *Populous* you've got the general idea. We're looking at another isometric 3D landscape here, the main feature of which is a couple of villages separated by a river and linked by a single bridge. It all looks fairly happy and peaceful, but there's a catch – a wizard's curse means that every 21 years the two settlements must take arms against one another and try to capture the other's flag. The winning village wins peace and quiet for a couple of decades, while the losers are forced to serve a malicious wizard and generally have a grim time of it. Players make use of various local characters including magicians, spies, warriors, villains, builders and even dragons.

On the upside: Novel twist on what is essentially an old story...

On the downside: ...but these 3D iso-thingy power games are beginning to get just a tiny bit tiresome.

What're its chances? Fair – but 3D isometric things are flavour of the month at the moment and *Flag* will have to be pretty special to stand out. The Ian Harling connection promises some gorgeous visuals though.

CAPTAIN PLANET

***Captain Planet*: Tony Crowther is hoping to repeat the success of *Captive*.**

Publisher: Mindscape
Programmer: Tony Crowther, the man behind *Bombuzal* and *Captive*.
ETA: October

Briefly: Anti-pollution is the big message running through this season's line up of games, but none are as blatantly optimistic as *Captain Planet*. Based on the ecologically sound superhero of the same name, the game is being crafted by Tony '*Captive*' Crowther, which seems to suggest that it'll be really rather good. Mr Planet is apparently a big name in superhero circles and is destined to take the place of *Turtles*, *Killer Tomatoes* and *Real Ghostbusters* in the Saturday morning cartoon slot. *Captain Planet* is surrounded by sugary characters who are dedicated to cleaning up Earth's act – each has his or her own special powers (related to the basic elements) and the game allows you to utilise all during different levels.

On the upside: Mindscape spent a hell of a lot of money on this licence, even though the name has yet to really make an impression outside computer games magazines. The decision to draft in Crowther seems to virtually guarantee a game that will appeal to all ages. Plenty of atmosphere and colour.

On the downside: No problem if you can stomach the pseudish ecological sentiments.

What're its chances? Certainly one of the big releases of the year, and a healthy chart placing seems pretty much guaranteed. Possibly, just possibly, a Number One.

***Planet* awareness.**

UTOPIA

Publisher: Gremlin
Programmers: Graham Ing and Robert Crack, the crew of the *BSS Jane Seymour*.
ETA: September

Briefly: It's back into isometric 3D land again for another bout of omnipotent meddling in the affairs of lesser beings. This time you're given a whole planet to play with. The idea is to build the ideal civilisation full of peace and flowers and people without all that many clothes on. But we all know how attempts at building utopia usually turn out – with a nasty kickback, this time in the form of attacks by 10 greedy and aggressive alien races...

On the upside: You control the social, economic and military development of your colony, so there's plenty of juggling with menus to be done for those with a strategic bent. Add the invasion difficulties and you've got something that's guaranteed to eat into your spare hours, while the slightly cartoony graphics appeal. Pedigree programmers too.

On the downside: Those crusty old *Populous/Sim City* comparisons are sure to make an appearance.

What're its chances? The idea of taking total control over a virgin planet has plenty of appeal. It's going to be an isometric autumn and winter, but *Utopia* looks like it'll hold its own.

3D war and peace in *Utopia*.

MYTH

Publisher: System 3
Programmers: In-house
ETA: September

Briefly: It's taken two years but the 8-bit classic has finally made it to the place it really belongs – on the Amiga. According to System 3, this is 'the most challenging action adventure ever created', which shows confidence at least.

On the upside: There are four huge levels of full multidirectional scrolling landscapes, sweetly animated characters and a smattering of strategy to confuse all you flesh fiends. Puzzles were neat in →

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Briefly: Less of the extended racing track feel of the first *Lotus*, and more of an *OutRun* style road race across America, this second game has a very different feel. Up to four players can compete (linked computer capability is planned for some spectacular simultaneous action) but the split screen effect has gone in one player mode to allow a bigger, more detailed play area. You'll notice the word 'Esprit' missing from the title – that's because certain stages put you behind the wheel of the Elan, a slower but better handling sports car, instead.

On the upside: The first *Lotus* was one of the best Amiga into-the-screen drives, and early word has that this improves on it in various significant ways.

On the downside: Sequels aren't necessarily an improvement – look at Gremlin's own *Supercars 2*.

What're its chances? Gremlin is expected to make a big play of the extra capabilities of the new *Lotus* – things like the linked Amigas trick – and that, backed by the high reputation of the first game, should see it do well. Course editor disk to be released later should prolong its appeal too.

TURBO CHARGE

Publisher: System 3
Programmers: In-house
ETA: October

Briefly: It's another high speed chase with you and flash Italian sports car pitted against more of those crazy drug dealers.

On the upside: It'll be fast and violent...

On the downside: ...just like hundreds of other driving games.

What're its chances? There's no reason to expect anything special.

DIE HARD II

Publisher: Grandslam Video
Programmers: Tiertex, converters of hundreds of arcade licences including *Strider* and home-grown sequel *Strider II*.
ETA: October

Briefly: Airport based cat-and-mouse actioner based on the high budget and the ultra-violent movie of the same name.

On the upside: Non-stop, roller-coaster ride of a plot and high body count make it a natural for →

***Myth*: Set to repeat the success of the 8-bit original?**

the 8-bit versions and they've been retained, though the central character is no longer Mr Everyman but has turned into a squat barbarian type.

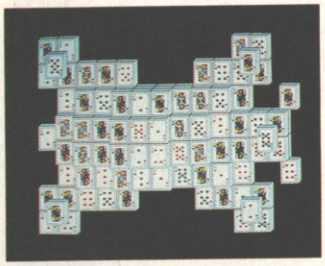
On the downside: This has taken a long time to come to fruition (it should have been out in May), but anyone who remembers the original will have ultra–high hopes of an excellent arcade-style game. We're not sure about the new central character either.

What're its chances?: If it lives up to expectations, *Myth* could be one of the best Amiga platform games yet, and if it's not, well, everyone will know about it soon enough.

SHANGHAI II

Publisher: Activision
Programmers: In-house
ETA: September

Briefly: Catchy oriental memory/strategy game involving the pairing off of identical tiles until none are left. It's similar in concept to the original *Shanghai* but Activision has thrown in a bag full of new tile layouts, dizzy animation and sound effects. You play with nine different layers of tiles, and can only move certain ones at any particular time, so it all gets just a wee bit complicated.



Tiles a tale: *Shanghai II*.

On the upside: Chinese puzzles are impossible to leave alone, and we expect this to be clean and crisp. Little extras like allowing players to create their own tile layouts make *Shanghai II* special.

On the downside: £35.99 (gulp)...

What're its chances? Seriously baffling price which could harm a good game's chances.

3D GOLF

Publisher: MicroProse
Programmers: The Thought Train, a new team of programmers in their professional debut.
ETA: September

Briefly: *3D Golf* is, ahem, golf in three dimensions.

On the upside: Up to four players, 10 computer opponents, the graphics look good and we're promised lots of highly detailed gameplay.

On the downside: We reckon no-one needs more than one golf game, and since *PGA Tour Golf* (Electronic Arts) is so brilliant, this might be in trouble.

What're its chances? It should put in a solid performance in Britain's bustling software stores, although chart glory seems unlikely.

SILENT SERVICE II

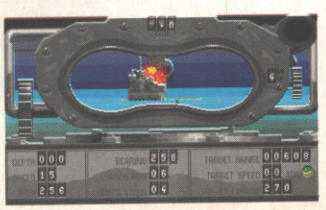
Publisher: MicroProse
Programmers: In-house
ETA: September

Briefly: Comprehensive World War II submarine simulation which attempts to supplement the commendable successes of its predecessor. This time there are better graphics, more scenarios and better sound. You can battle alongside the Japanese in the Pacific, or attempt to sink Allied shipping in the Atlantic. Attention to detail and all manner of missions add depth to the game.

On the upside: Bound to be atmospherically impressive and 'deep'. The original game clocked up sales of 625,000 worldwide and won 'Simulation of the Year' awards in six countries.

On the downside: No matter how accurate and painstakingly put together, submarine games can be deadly boring.

What's its chances? Excellent. Not a chart topper, but a suitably MicroProse-like attention to detail puts *Silent Service II* on a steady course for all-time-classic land. It's the kind of game you'd still be happy to buy in a couple of years time.



***Silent Service II*: in at the deep end.**

HOME ALONE

Publisher: Accolade
Programmers: Capstone, the people behind last issue's 'interesting' *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure*.
ETA: November

Briefly: Frolicsome arcade fun based on assorted sequences from the surprise hit movie. (You know, it's the one about the little kid who has to defend his family's house from a couple of particularly stupid burglars).

On the upside: Capstone are a Miami-based gang who seem to take delight in transferring, erm, 'odd' choices of movie to silicon. *Bill & Ted* (the game) isn't all that hot in its own right, but fans of the movie got a kick out of it. *Home Alone* seems likely to repeat that.

On the downside: We don't hold out much hope for the gameplay – it's likely to be the sort of thing that wouldn't get a look in without the movie licence.

What're its chances? While the video stomps its way to the top of the charts, the game is likely to put in a mediocre performance. Not a cynical licence rip-off, but it's unlikely to be regarded as a classic.

***Home Alone*: Great movie, but that doesn't guarantee a good game. We'll reserve judgement until we see the finished version.**

CHINTO'S REVENGE

Publisher: Millennium
Programmers: In-house
ETA: September

The distinctive Japanese-looking graphics and overhead view of *Chinto's Revenge*.

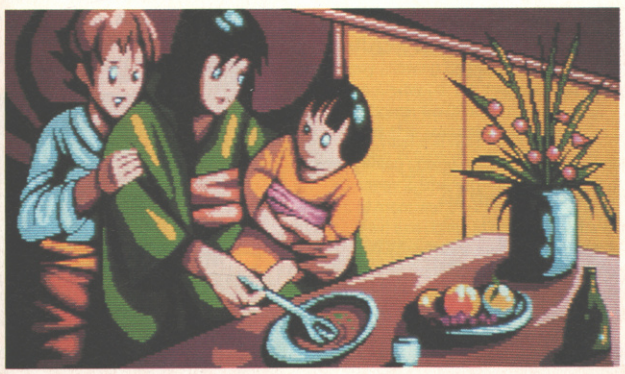
Briefly: Very Japanese cartoon adventure sporting state of the art graphics and animation. Guide the unfeasibly large sprite of Chinto into an evil castle, avoid all the traps, do away with all the guards, and save your sweetheart.

On the upside: Pictorially spectacular (if odd) journey featuring imaginative quirks and high emotions. Just what you'd expect from a game heavily influenced by Japanese comic culture.

On the downside: There's still a question mark over how successful they'll be with gameplay...

What're its chances? Let's hope for something out of the ordinary. There's still more that could be done with the Amiga's graphics capabilities, and this could be a step in the right direction.

Story-line plays a strong part in *Chinto's Revenge*, with well drawn characters on a linear adventure. But how well will it play?



Here we see the happy Chinto family, tucking into a tasy Oriental dish just before everything goes horribly world.

NEBULUS II

Publisher: 21st Century
Programmers: Infernal Bytes (debut)
ETA: September

Briefly: Remember the original *Nebulus*? It involved working a frog-like character up and through a series of tower complexes, picking up useful bonuses and disposing of useless enemies. It was a smash hit. This version differs in that you have to climb down towers as well as up. Naturally, there are more bonuses, more baddies and prettier graphics.

On the upside: The original was sensational and rates highly among many people's all-time favourite games. A sequel is long overdue. 21st Century (themsleves a sequel to the now defunct Hewson) badly need a hit,so hopefully they'll pull all the stops out.

On the downside: Though original programmer John Philips is helping out, he wasn't interested in re-working the game himself – a real shame. The sequel will have to do interesting things with the basic concept to be worth the effort.

What're its chances? No hiding behind licences here – with a product like this it all comes down to how well they've done the game.

It's all ups and downs with *Nebulus II*'s eight towers.

MAGIC POCKETS

Publisher: Renegade
Programmers: The Bitmap Brothers, responsible for... But, ah. You know the rest.
ETA: September

Briefly: *Magic Pockets* is the Bitmaps' first attempt at writing a cute platform game. True to form, they haven't been able to resist the temptation to give the graphics the metallic look that's become their trademark. Central character The Bitmap Kid, who bears an unnerving resemblance to Nathan, of Image Works' *Brat* fame ('But we did it first!' shout the Bitmaps), finds himself on a quest to retrieve some of his lost toys from the →

Typically weird graphics from the Bitmaps in this cute platform jump-a-long.

conversion. The strength of the film is likely to earn it a high profile.

On the downside: The first *Die Hard* conversion was PC and C64 only and didn't make much of an impression. Faith in this revitalised Grandslam is low, particularly in the light of the old company's *The Hunt For The Red October* effort.

What're its chances? Don't hold your breath.

LAST NINJA III

Publisher: System 3
Programmers: In-house
ETA: September

Briefly: According to System 3, *Ninja III* 'takes you back to the very core of the Ninja's spiritual power' with battles taking place across levels depicting the four elements. All very interesting, but just how violent is it?

On the upside: The 8-bit boys have already had their versions, and response has been close to orgasmic. One magazine got itself into a state of nirvana and handed out a 100 per cent rating (!) Fighting effects are said to be state of the art – certainly more has been made of them in this game than previous versions – while gameplay is basically a souped-up version of the same collect-object-to-use-on-puzzle-in-a-later-screen affair. Still, this promises to be much more of a console-style product than previous *Last Ninja* games.

On the downside: Despite healthy C64 roots, System 3 have yet to make any mark at all on the 16-bit machines. Certainly, Amiga versions of the previous *Last Ninjas* have been disappointing. The whole thing'll be a complete turn-off if fighting isn't your thing too.

What're its chances? It all depends on whether a 16-bit audience can be persuaded to go for it, really. Still, System 3 deserve to make their big 16-bit breakthrough, and this could be the game that will do it for them.

REALMS

Publisher: Virgin
Programmers: Steve Turner, Andrew Braybrook and the Graftgold team.
ETA: September

Briefly: The look is obviously *Populous/ Powermonger* based, but Virgin are at pains to play →

that down. This is far more of a straight strategy game they say, in fact based on an uncompleted idea Steve Turner had five years ago for a Spectrum game. You control one realm – a network of, say, five or six towns linked by trade routes sending taxes to the capital – and have to build up its strength (in terms of cash, armies, health of the people), defend it against attack and eventually defeat your opposing computer-controlled realm. It's all to do with controlling the lines of communication, apparently. One of the most exciting of the various projects that came up for grabs following the collapse of Activision UK.

On the upside: Programmers Graftgold rarely put a foot wrong, and have worked successfully with Virgin before (on *Ivan 'Iron Man' Stewart's Super Off Road Racer*). They have to be seen as a major plus. The fractal map, battle sequences and general presentation are spot on too, and, of course, games using the *Populous* style viewpoint are hot at the moment.

On the downside: Though we've seen a number of demos, the gameplay has yet to be fully worked out yet – and that'll make or break the game. That the same basic idea could have worked on the Spectrum could prove either a strength or a weakness – a brief description of the basic cutting off of supply routes routine sounds suspiciously simple to us.

What're it's chances? Could, and perhaps should, be one of the big hits of the autumn – the talent is certainly there, and since the game was actually started before *Powermonger* there's been time to iron out all the glitches. It could get lost in the flood of similar product (*Mega-Lo-Mania*, *Utopia*, even *Populous II* itself when that eventually comes out) due towards the end of the year.

REACH FOR THE SKIES

Publisher: Mirrorsoft
Programmers: PSS
ETA: September

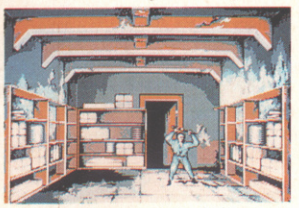
Briefly: Another chance to change the course of history in this recreation of the *Battle of Britain*. *Reach for the Skies* could be PSS's most ambition →

ALCATRAZ

Publisher: Infogrames
Programmers: In-house
ETA: September

***Alcatraz*: Lots of action to come, but first the briefing.**

Briefly: Now here's a novel concept – you have to break INTO Alcatraz, the infamous 'hell-hole' prison and part-time aviary. The plot has it that the island penitentiary has somehow become the off-shore base for a large and dangerous drug ring. Written in the style of Infogrames' previous hit *Hostages*, you control a troop of SAS-type commandos on a mission to go in there and, well, kick some ass...



All these prison rooms look the same.

On the upside: Nice graphics, loads of enemies, loud music, eclectic gameplay. *Hostages* had its fans...

On the downside: ...but we don't know all that many of them (except for Gary, anyway). Whether it can make any significant improvement on the original concept is a moot point. If not, expect predictable, standardised thrills.

What're its chances? Written for the charts, and likely to be one of Infogrames' biggest hits to date.

Explosive split-screen in *Alcatraz*.

usual crew of horrid meanies, with the aid of a whole variety of weapons plucked from his *Magic Pockets* (hence the title).

On the upside: As you can see from the screenshots, *Magic Pockets* looks absolutely lovely (and this isn't even the finished version). The Bitmaps are continuing with the intelligent enemies tradition that featured so heavily in their *Gods*, and generally the buzz about the game is excellent.

On the downside: Well, it's not the most radical departure you could imagine, is it? There's the danger of over-complicating matters – cute arcade platform games usually rely on rather simplistic gameplay for easy access and instant appeal – and the graphic style might prove inappropriate in the final analysis too.

What're its chances? Very good indeed. The Bitmaps have yet to program a turkey, either critically or commercially, and the huge exposure this one's already achieved (including much plugging on a Saturday morning TV show) should guarantee a monster success. The 90 percent completed version we've seen already looks like a winner.

FINAL BLOW

Publisher: Storm
Programmers: Stephen Hooper and an in-house team at The Sales Curve, Storm's parent company.
ETA: September

Briefly: *Final Blow* is a fairly straightforward arcade boxing game based on a Taito coin-op. The Amiga version offers ten opponents – a few more than in the original – each of which has his own particular characteristics (a weak chin, a powerful right cross etc), various fighting moves, a league system and, that's about it. Impressively big sprites though.

On the upside: Boxing games are popular in the arcades, and this one perhaps more so than most. The large graphics make the game initially impressive, and the programmers have made laudable attempts to widen the

Let's hope *Final Blow* is a better game than some other boxing conversions we've suffered.

scope of the game and improve its long term interest by adding to the gameplay, rather than taking bits out.

On the downside: But have they added enough? By its very nature, boxing doesn't offer all that much scope for variety, and that could be its downfall.

What're its chances? Likely to do reasonably well, but it won't set the house on fire – unless they manage to pull off a truly spectacular conversion, that is.

RODLAND

Publisher: Storm
Programmers: Ronald Pieket Weeserik, John Croudy and Neil Langman (graphics) at The Sales Curve.
ETA: September

Briefly: A ridiculously cute – you could say too cute – Jaleco coin-op in the style of, say, *Bubble Bobble*, converted to the Amiga. You play one of two candyfloss haired '*My Little Pony*'-esque girls, on a platform and ladders mission to rescue their nubile kidnapped 'Mom' from some terrible unseen baddy. Each screen forms a single level, and gameplay consists of climbing ladders (both fixed and created by yourself), collecting flowers and the like for points, and killing baddies by catching them with your magic wands and repeatedly beating them into the ground. It's limited but fun.

On the upside: Gorgeous graphics ported from the coin-op, simultaneous two player mode and a generally polished feel. Programmer Pieket Weeserik worked on *SWIV*, which bodes well, and he's managed to include extra animated sequences not seen in the arcade version. The behaviour patterns of the various fluffy baddies has been made more sophisticated too, which helps matters.

On the downside: At a reported 40 screens long, there doesn't seem to be much to it. The action, while fun in →

***Rodland* is no *Bubble Bobble*, but it's ample fun anyway**

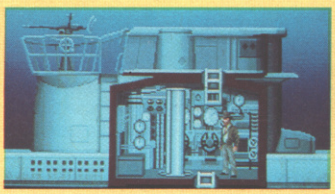
INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS

Left: Indy Jones globe-trotting yet again in this latest escapade.

Publisher: Lucasfilm (US Gold)
Programmers: Ron Gilbert and a Lucasfilm in-house team.
ETA: November

Briefly: US Gold are releasing two new Indy games, the first time they've NOT been based on the hit films. The action game is being put together by Attention To Detail (the *Night Shift* people) in this country, features a 3D isometric viewpoint and introduces a female sidekick to our hero. Meanwhile, the potentially even more interesting adventure is being worked on by Lucasfilm in the States. Plot details are currently vague – Indy battles Nazis, goes to locations in North Africa and Monte Carlo amongst others, and at some point visits (you guessed it) Atlantis – but it is confirmed that the game uses an improved version of the *Monkey Island* style point-and-click system and draws heavily on the characters and situations featured in the three films.

Perhaps the most exciting thing though is a new 'three ways to play' idea – the game adapts itself to your preferred style of play, presenting you with the same locations and basic plot but biasing things towards fighting, talking or puzzling your way out of difficulties depending on which method you initially use.



In search of the fabled city of Atlantis.

Indy with his latest female sidekick.

On the upside: Fans of Ron Gilbert's previous excellent *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* adventure (not to mention his *Monkey Island*) will be waiting with bated breath for this – and it's unlikely to disappoint.

On the downside: We can't really think of one.

What're its chances? Absolutely excellent – if *The Secret Of Monkey Island* can get to the top end of the chart, how can a similar quality adventure with such a strong licence as this attached to it possibly fail?

Lucasfilm's graphics get better every time.

Elvira II:

The Jaws of Cerberus

Publisher: Accolade
Programmers: Horrorsoft, Birmingham- based programmers of the first *Elvira*.
ETA: October

Elvira: She won't go away.

Briefly: Fantasy role-playing game located on the sets of three horror movies, thereby allowing for plenty of typical horror film type characters and lots of cheap gags. Cerberus, the three-headed dog from Greek legend, appears at the end, although we're not quite sure why.

On the upside: We thought the original *Elvira* was pretty poor – too much disk access and not enough game. However, Accolade says it was their biggest seller in Europe thus far so they must be doing something right.

On the downside: See above. Elvira's got potential as a licence, but if they can't get it right perhaps they'd be better pensioning her off.

What're its chances? Strong (if what Accolade say about the first game is to be believed).

project to date with heavy strategy content mixed with splashes of action. We've certainly come a long way since Mirrorsoft brought out *Spitfire 40*.

On the upside: It's meticulously researched, and there are options to play on either side as a pilot or as a controller. Absolutely humming with summer of 1940 atmosphere, with most of the aircraft involved in the battle getting a look in. The missions given to pilots are the actual missions fought at the time.

On the downside: Don't expect a get-in-and-fly arcade game.

What're its chances? We all harbour a soft spot for Spitfires, tin legs and Sir John Mills. The war game of the autumn.

BARBARIAN II

Publisher: Psygnosis
Programmers: In-house
ETA: October

Briefly: You're bound to be told a hundred and one times that this has nothing whatsoever to do with Palace's head chopping frenzy of the same name, so we promise not to mention it again. Anyway, this one's a scrolling arcade adventure in typical Psygnosis Style (with a capital S). Check out the 2,000 frames of sprite animation, 50 divergent enemies, and six levels of continuous action.

On the upside: Anyone's who is familiar with Psygnosis arcade-style games will have a rough idea of what to expect. Plenty of atmosphere, nice sound effects, and scrupulous attention to detail.

On the downside: Gameplay has suffered many times before in the pursuit of demo-like animation.

What're its chances? It's competing against a lot of coin-op conversions in the action stakes, but will almost certainly hold its own.

MERCENARY III

Publisher: Novagen
Programmers: Paul Woakes
ETA: October

Briefly: No prizes for figuring out that this is the third in the *Mercenary* series (which seems to have been going on for almost as long as *Coronation Street*). Fans of the previous two will be expecting plenty of →

exploration through grim three dimensional space colonies. This time though there are far more enemies to tackle.

On the upside: Pretty and involved with plenty of character interaction and battle sequences.

On the downside: Some may feel that it falls between the two stools of action and adventure.

What're its chances? A shoot-'em-up game for brainy types.

JRR TOLKEIN'S RIDERS OF ROHAN

Publisher: PSS (Mirrorsoft)
Programmers: Beam Software
ETA: November

Briefly: Best described as a strategy war game with a twist. *Riders of Rohan* features all that you'd expect from a Tolkein-esque adventure with the welcome addition of some arcade sequences and sub-games. Characters are a high priority.

On the upside: Will be involved and engrossing for Tolkein fans, and we're promised more from the Australian programmers.

On the downside: If you despise Tolkein's stuff (and there are a fair few of us), then you're bound to hate this.

What're its chances? Beam Software have been banging out Tolkein games for donkey's years, and they always find an audience.

ROBIN HOOD

Publisher: Millennium
Programmers: In-house
ETA: October

Briefly: The viewpoint is that of a 3D isometric thingy and features 36 familiar characters milling around Nottingham. It's up to you to influence these characters; your actions (and subsequently theirs) will define the outcome of this classic medieval encounter.

On the upside: We hear that Millennium have sunk heart and soul into this project, plus adventures are getting better all the time.

On the downside: Realtime character interaction is a pain to pull off.

What're its chances? Tales of Sherwood are very much in vogue, so perhaps they can attract enough non-adventure types.

CONSPIRACY

Publisher: Accolade
Programmers: Accolade US
ETA: October

Briefly: It's a weird one this. A straight modern-day pictorial adventure based on the 'mean' streets of New York City, the story is told entirely through text and static digitised pictures. Accolade are calling it the first fully digitised adventure, giving us some 350 images to play with. As fits the title, the plot-line sounds like something off a railway café bookrack – CIA agent is killed in posh hotel and you are the prime suspect. Caught between the real murderers and a bunch of grey-suited agency boys, you've got 24 hours to pick up seven files located around the Big Apple and get to the bottom of it all...

On the upside: Some tasty images from the big city wrapped around an easy to play, icon driven digital thriller makes for quite an appealing project. Action sequences too apparently, though we're not sure exactly how these'll work. An interesting, brave game bound to find an audience...

On the downside: ...though we couldn't say how large. Accolade reckons there are 40 hours of gameplay here, but that'll mean a good deal of going over old ground. The digital pictures are a good idea, but they could also be slow and hamper gameplay.

What're its chances? These interactive novel things rarely deliver as much as they promise, but we're happy to be surprised.

Man about town: New York City-based digitised adventure takes you around the famous sights.

the short term, gets repetitive too – and feels rather too easy. (In fact, it all plays not unlike a beautiful but slowed down version of last month's PD giveaway, *Frantic Freddie*). Despite appearances, this is no *Bubble Bobble*.

What're it's chances? Its pretty and appealing nature will see it through, but the gameplay is simply nowhere near as deep or rewarding as that of the best platform cuties. Strictly short term fun.

FLOOR 13

Publisher: Virgin
Programmers: David Eastman, Shahid Ahmad and (graphics) Carl Cropley.
ETA: Late October

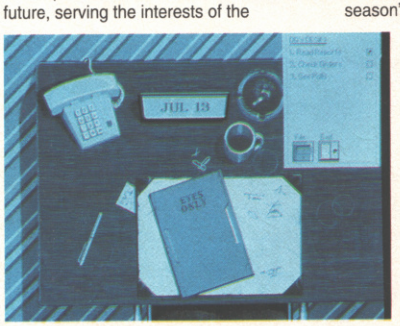
In brief: A complicated, multi-plot strategy game presented in a keyboard controlled, pull-down windows adventure game style. You are put in control of a secret police force in the UK of the near future, serving the interests of the unspecified government of the day in any way you see fit. Balancing use of your surveillance, pursuit, interrogation, search, removal, heavy assault, disinformation and infiltration departments, you must go about your business, removing dangers to your government in any way you see fit – without being caught doing it.

It's no good simply assassinating everyone, as you'll be found out, government connections will be made, and they'll be booted out of office – the opposite of what you're trying to achieve. Various tasks have to be accomplished – using whatever methods you see fit – to keep you in the game, while a sub-plot involving your loyalty to another, more shadowy, organisation complicates things.

On the upside: *Conflict* fans will want to see what David Eastman's been doing since then, and the product helps sell itself. The conspiracy theories it puts forward are intriguing, and the execution looks sound. Without a doubt one of the most interesting and original of this season's releases.

On the downside: Static, rather grey looking graphics and adventure game approach will put many off. There's a strong chance it'll be one of those products with an exciting and interesting premise which never really manages to make anything interesting out of it.

What're it's chances? Providing it doesn't get totally lost beneath flashier titles, very good indeed. Possibly something that'll be more of a hit with PC game players than their generally more arcade-conscious Amiga cousins.



***Floor 13*: A grim, amoral power control adventure with plenty of conspiracy theory appeal.**

MEGA-LO-MANIA

Publisher: Image Works
Programmers: Sensible Software (*MicroProse Soccer*, *International 3D Tennis*)
ETA: September

Briefly: Similar to *Populous* but smaller and potentially more of a giggle. You are colonising an island and nurturing it through different time phases (Prehistoric, Roman, Medieval, Victorian and so on) while staving off rival nations. If they develop faster than you, you'll be fighting fire with clubs.

On the upside: From what we've seen this has exceptional pace, so there's no chance of getting stuck in some deplorable time-zone. Digitised speech (real actors were used) and humorous asides are nice touches.

On the downside: Needs 1Mb for the full compliment of effects.

What're its chances? Appealing ideas and quality programming will push this straight into the big league. Definitely worth sampling.

The light-hearted approach to power-mongering in *Mega-Lo-Mania*.

Don't make the mistake of thinking this the definitive list of Autumn releases – there's far too much planned for this peak release period to possibly mention here, and we apologise in advance for any we've missed out. (Just check out this little lot from Ocean alone – *Hudson Hawk*, *Terminator II*, *Space Gun*, *Billy the Kid*, *Epic* and *Darkman*.) Phew! Happy shopping!

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IF WE'D KNOWN THEN...

...what we know now, we'd have done it all rather differently. Or something like that, anyway. Adrian Stephens, Andy Beveridge, Martin Day and Ricardo Pinto make up THE ASSEMBLY LINE, the usually innovative, always interesting and often quite weird force behind games such as *Interphase*, *E-Motion* and recent success *Cybercon III*. Just why, we asked them, have all your games been so, well, odd?

A FEW ODD LITTLE BITS ON THE SIDE

Martin: In between all the Assembly Line stuff, I've been doing quite a few bits on the side – Ricardo doesn't want me to, but it helps to pay the rent. There was *Exterminator* for Audiogenic for one, a coin-op conversion that I think improved on the original – the arcade game had some beautiful 3D in it, but the collision detection was way out. Then there was *Xenon 2*, of course. This was great – it was designed by the Bitmaps, and though I just did the coding, for a game like that it's actually quite a major thing. *Pipe Mania* was the other one. John came up with the game design for this. Its beauty was that once you'd got the idea, the rest was very easy to do. People said it was very original, but really it wasn't – it was inspired by a number of other games, though I couldn't tell you what they were. Timing was perhaps the most important thing – it came out after *Tetris*, but before the flood of puzzle games, and made quite a name for itself.

Exterminator: nice 3D, shame about the game

EARLY DAYS

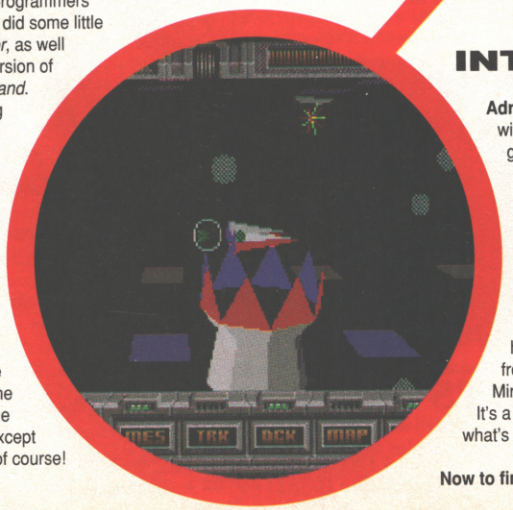
Adrian: I did all sorts of things – *Killer Gorilla, Mr Ee, Crazy Painter, Flip, Ping Pong*, lots of old BBC games...
Martin: ...while I did an *Arkanoid* clone called *Impact* and something called *Helter Skelter* for Audiogenic, a bit of programming on *Fernandez Must Die*, and a rather nifty assembler program/development system called 'Snasm', which is used by the Bitmaps, Realtime, Vektor Grafix, The Sales Curve, Psygnosis...
Ricardo: ...and I did *Gyron* on the Spectrum, the Z80 version of *Elite*, and a good deal of the early game design for *Carrier Command* back when I worked at Rainbird.
Andy: I was involved in that too – I used to work for the programmers Realtime and did some little bits for *Carrier*, as well as the first version of *Battle Command*. It was nothing like the game they came out with in the end though.
Martin: Basically, what we're trying to say is that all the stuff we did before we formed The Assembly Line was crap – except for my ones of course!

Carrier: genuine all-time classic

The Assembly Line, clockwise from top left: Adrian Stephens, Martin Day, Ricardo Pinto, Andy Beveridge

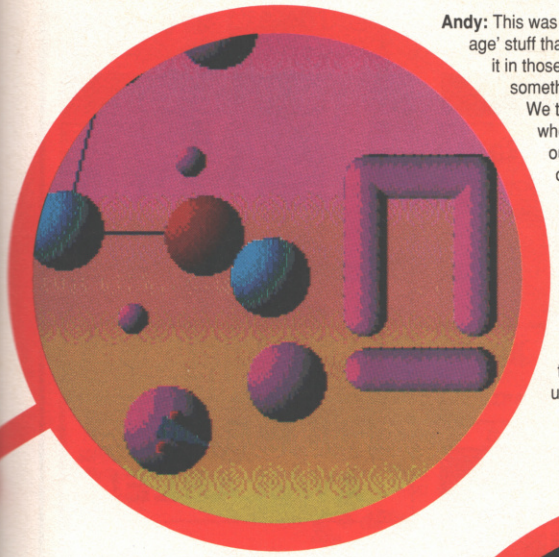
INTERPHASE

Adrian: This one started back in 1988 when I went to Mirrorsoft with the ideas and 3D routines, knowing I wanted to write a game but not having the faintest idea about game design. For various reasons nobody there came up with a proper framework for it either, so in the end I found myself in the ridiculous situation of working on a project for one and a half years with no clear idea about what it was I was actually working on! Eventually a chap called Dean Lester, now at Teque, thought something up and there it was, we had *Interphase*.
Looking back at it now, I'd say the game is alright, but it'd have been a lot better if I'd known what I was aiming at from the start. It was a bit abstract, perhaps – I know Mirrorsoft are now a lot more wary of taking on games like this. It's a lot easier to sell something where anyone can easily grasp what's going on.



Now to find out how you can get *Interphase* cheap, flick to page 92!

E-MOTION



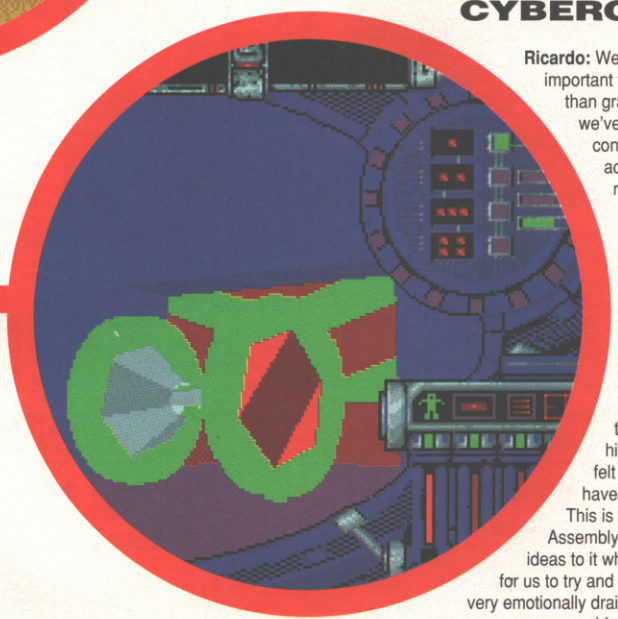
Andy: This was initially designed by a chap called John Dale who used to work with us. I think all that 'new age' stuff that surrounded it was basically due to the rather mellow graphics – we certainly didn't think of it in those terms at all. It was a very minimalist game, and while all the reviews said, yes, here's something that's completely different, nobody seemed to want to buy it.

We tend to fit into that category a lot actually – of programmers who everybody talks about but who never produce big hit games. I think it's because we've often tended to out-weird even ourselves – we're aware of it and we're trying not to do it any more. I think you'll find that all our new stuff is much more accessible.

Adrian: The reason it looks like it does is that I can't draw, and neither could John, so we ray traced all the graphics. It really started off as a demo we did to impress people – things like putting the bits of string in that tie the balls together we added because they looked nice, not particularly because they contributed much to the game.

Ricardo: I think the thing is that these guys are technically brilliant programmers, but having recently joined them I can see that they haven't always had the support in terms of games development and style that they need – that's hopefully something I can bring to the team. We have a great belief in 3D games and will continue doing them – perhaps because the infinite number of views makes them so close to reality – but hopefully we'll be coming up with more accessible games using the same style.

CYBERCON III



Ricardo: Well, it's a very fast game, but that's not actually the important thing. Too many 3D games are really little more than graphics demos with a plot tacked on – it's a trap we've fallen into ourselves – but here we've really concentrated on the game side of things. Playing it is actually a very intense experience – after a bit you really get to feeling you're in this place, and it can get genuinely scary at times.

Andy: I think one thing we're proud of is that we've not cheated at all in *Cybercon*. We've made a conscious effort to get it all down to earth and understandable, while at the same time give people real value for money. We're very aware of the fact that £25 is a lot and we really have to deliver at least £25 worth of entertainment.

I think the only thing we're disappointed about is that the front end is weak – we really wanted a highly polished Psygnosis-style intro sequence, and felt the game deserved it. Having said that though, we haven't compromised at all with the actual game.

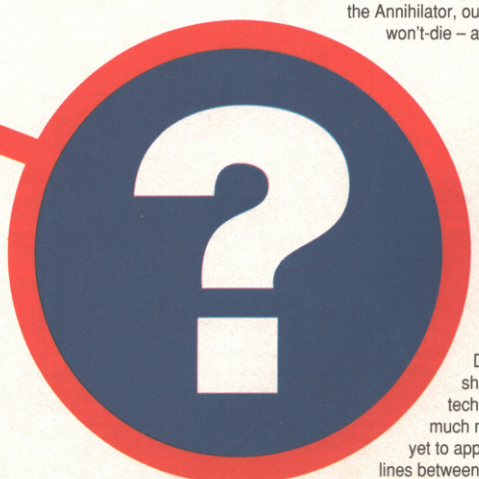
This is the first product Ricardo has worked on with The Assembly Line, and he's brought a lot of role playing type ideas to it which has been a real help. He's also really pushed for us to try and create feelings of tension and atmosphere. It's a very emotionally draining sort of a game – some sequences can give you a real feeling of vertigo, others, especially those featuring the Annihilator, our movie-style monster-that-just-won't-die – are genuinely frightening.

VAXINE

Adrian: A lot of people had a lot of trouble with this – I think I'm the only person I've ever met who can properly play it! What happened was I wrote this ray traced thing, decided I wanted to generate sprites with it and ended up with something that looked like *Vaxine*. I couldn't think of what to do with it after that though, and it was only after John came up with his idea for *E-Motion* that it began to turn into a game. We put the strings in because they'd looked nice in *E-Motion*, but then we had to try and think of a purpose to the game play. I wouldn't really recommend it as a way of working – to come up with something that looks pretty and then add a game to it.

Ricardo: I think it's something that did work as a shoot-'em-up, but people don't seem to want to play it that way. It's often referred to as a puzzle game, but it's just *Defender* in 3D really. Once people get their minds around that, they're often a lot happier with the game. Of course, it doesn't make getting to grips with the 'slightly unusual' control movement any easier...

Now hurry to page 92 for the bargain of the century!



THE FUTURE

Andy: We're doing a flight sim with a big difference – which we can't tell you about yet! – for Disney Software, using Gouraud shading, a very sophisticated technique for making objects appear much more solid and rounded which has yet to appear in a game. You don't get sharp lines between planes on a shape anymore, and the results are just stunning.

Beyond that we've got ideas for, ooh, maybe 12 other projects, though we normally only like to have around three on the go at any one time. We've learned a lot from doing *Cybercon* as far as making the gameplay work, but that's really only the beginning. And then, of course, Ricardo is threatening to take up programming again, and show us all how it's *really* done..!

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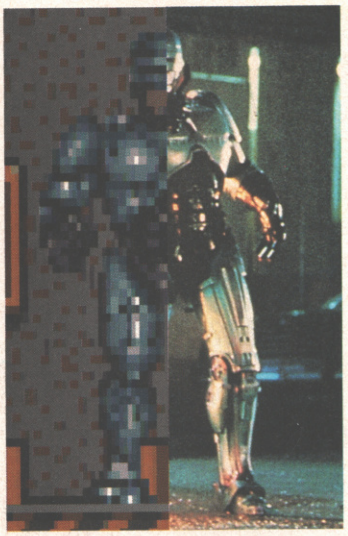

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As a whole new crop of big name film conversions limber up for the chance to grab big wodges of your pocket money this Christmas, Matt Bielby asks some pertinent questions. Like how do you go about converting a film? Why do people bother? And why on earth do so many of them turn out to be completely crap?

WHY CONVERT A FILM IN THE FIRST PLACE?

The answer to this one's easy. It's money, isn't it? With a strong film licence to tackle, not only do you get all the gigantic publicity of the film – not to mention that generated by the rest of the associated merchandise – boosting your game in the eyes of the punters, you also get a strongly identifiable image mums and grannies are far more likely to pick up as presents than any coin-op based title (and *certainly* any original game). Provided the film's a hit – and that's a big risk – this really can be a licence to print money. Movies have international appeal too – perhaps more than any other medium – which (as they say) can't hurt.

HOW LONG DO YOU GET TO DO IT?

It all depends on the film. If your software company has picked up the licence to an oldie – a movie that's been around for a few years – you've got yourself a bit more flexibility. Domark tend to do one Bond game a year – every other one it's a tie-in with the release of a new film (and so simply has to be finished in time to hit the shops when 007 'fever' is at its peak) but for the other game there's less of a rush.

This tends to be a back catalogue product – *The Spy Who Loved Me* most recently – and because the release doesn't really have to tie in with anything in particular the programmers get a lot longer to concentrate on the actual game. (Hurrah!) We'll go into how much time you get for a current film in a moment.

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHICH BITS OF THE FILM TO PUT IN THE GAME?

There are two basic schools of thought on this. There's the let's-stick-together-a-series-of-sub-games-where-each-one-illustrates-an-important-scene-from-the-movie idea – perhaps typified by Ocean's ultra-successful *Batman* – and then there's the single-game-mechanic-adapted-to-try-and-fit-all-the-aspects-of-the-film approach, as seen in, say, *Licence To Kill*. Both have their upsides and of course their downsides.

With the Ocean approach, you certainly manage to give the impression the game player is getting a lot for his money – Look! It's almost the same as buying four different games! – and get a good chance to remain faithful to the plot of the movie. However, these games can have a very disjointed feel, with none of the individual sub-games providing a great deal of challenge or satisfaction on their own. Something like *Ghostbusters II* falls apart totally on this front.

The Domark-style approach has its problems too. While you do get the chance to properly develop a single game style, attempts to link it all in with what actually happened in the movie can look increasingly desperate. *Licence To Kill* went for a vertically scrolling look which was fine at representing certain action scenes, but had no chance at all of coping with plenty of other important movie moments that just refused to fit into that format. The solution? They were ignored.

HOW IMPORTANT IS CHARACTER?

Very important indeed, we'd say – probably a lot more important than any of the actual events in the film *per se*. (If you don't believe us, just think about the upcoming *Terminator II* game for a moment – it's the idea of this big, unstoppable robot Arnie that sticks in your mind, not any of the actual plot twists, which you probably don't know anything about anyway).

US Gold's *Moonwalker* is the perfect example of where trying to stick with accurately representing a film can cause problems. Compare it – with its two characterless puzzle game-style overhead-view maze chase-arounds, acceptable *Op Wolf* sequence and giant robot ending – to the Sega arcade game (and Megadrive conversion) of the same name. The big problem – well, *one* big problem – with the US Gold game is that you hardly ever see the Michael Jackson character. In one scene he's in the form of a giant rabbit on a motorbike, in another he's a car, in a third he's got his back to us and in the last he's a giant robot.

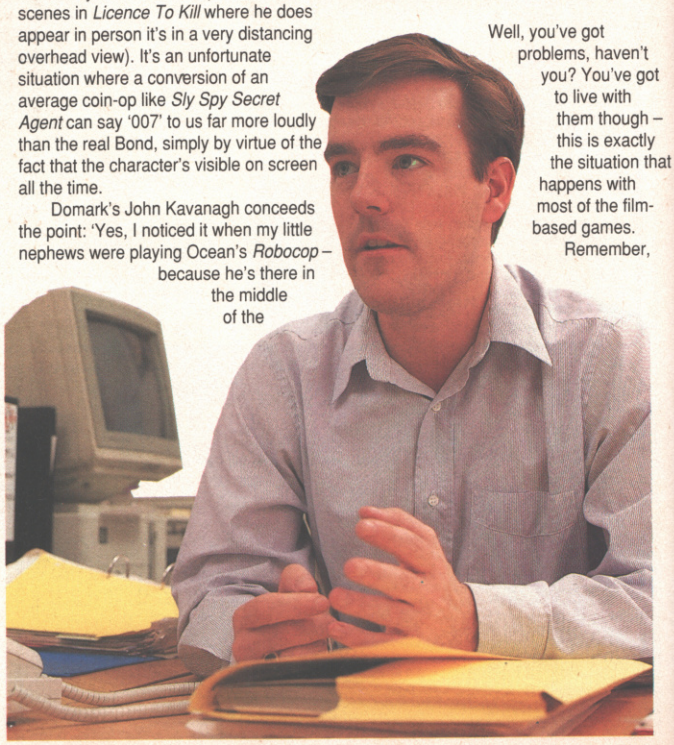
On the other hand, Sega's coin-op puts a nicely represented Michael Jackson on screen the whole time, yelling and whooping and kicking his way through some *Rolling Thunder*-style beat-'em-up action. The game may not be so closely tied to actual events in the film, but it says 'Michael Jackson' much more successfully – and incidentally creates a much more coherent game too.

It's a problem Domark's Bond games suffer from to perhaps an even greater degree, the most recent of which have put 007 in cars and boats and things so we can hardly see him at all! (Even in the brief scenes in *Licence To Kill* where he does appear in person it's in a very distancing overhead view). It's an unfortunate situation where a conversion of an average coin-op like *Sly Spy Secret Agent* can say '007' to us far more loudly than the real Bond, simply by virtue of the fact that the character's visible on screen all the time.

Domark's John Kavanagh conceeds the point: 'Yes, I noticed it when my little nephews were playing Ocean's *Robocop* – because he's there in the middle of the screen all the time, you can shout at him, talk to him and it all becomes much more personal. It's something I've been very aware of with a new (currently untitled) Bond game we're working on, initially for the Sega Master System, though it might come over to the Amiga. It's not based on any particular film, but is more a generic James Bond game – it's a sideways viewed shoot-'em-up a bit like *Rolling Thunder*, animated in the *Prince Of Persia* style. In fact, imagine 007 meets *Prince Of Persia* and you're half way there.'
Ah yes, that sounds much more promising.

HOW DO YOU DO A FILM CONVERSION IF THE FILM YOU'RE TRYING TO CONVERT DOESN'T EVEN EXIST YET?

Well, you've got problems, haven't you? You've got to live with them though – this is exactly the situation that happens with most of the film-based games. Remember,



Fergus McGovern of Probe – arcade and film converters *extraordinaire*.

release dates for both film and game have to be near-as-possible the same, and that means both mediums have to be developed side by side. For a brief rundown of the processes you have to go through, here's Fergus McGovern of Probe – the example we're using is current top-secret project *Alien III*.

Step 1

'What usually happens first – and this is certainly the way it's worked with the new *Alien* game – is that we get sent a film script. That's all – no pictures, no illustrations, nothing else at all. This will arrive a minimum of six months and a maximum of, say, a year before the game is meant to be released – it's got to be finished so it can be tied in with the big publicity that surrounds the cinema release of a film, after all.'

Step 2

'We take five photocopies of the basic script. I keep one, and copies go to Jo Bonar and Neil Young (the two producers here), to the potential programmer and/or graphic artist and – perhaps most importantly – to an independent storyboard reader. The chap we use is actually a local English teacher, and he does a lot of the donkey work breaking down the script for us.

'First he produces a 1000 word summary of the film, including all the key elements, so we can all easily see what the movie's about at a glance – film scripts are long things, you know, and take some wading through! Then he'll do us a separate sheet detailing all the characters – he'll describe them (in as much as he's able to from the script), pick out all their visible character traits and personalities. He's very good at this – when we eventually get to see the film (which may not be until after the game comes out!) you can tell that he's been getting it right nine times out of 10.

'The third sheet he does for us describes all the locations found in the film so we know what to aim for as far as settings are concerned, and then last he describes the technology used. Do people use guns or knives? What's the transport like? This sort of thing – he may make suggestions that we look at other films or comics or whatever to get an idea about what he's on about. For this project we've been looking at the two existing *Alien* films and the *Aliens* spin-off comics for ideas and simply a sense of atmosphere.'

Step 3

'We'll then use all this information to come up with a basic draft of the games design, which we'll send to the publisher – in this case Mirrorsoft. With *Alien III* the person we're dealing with is Tony Beckwith, and he'll add his own ideas to the ones we've thought of'.

Step 4

'Because we're doing two versions of *Alien III*, things split pretty naturally here. Jo is more into action games, so he seemed a natural to take charge of that version, while Neil is much more into adventures-style products. The two of them come up →

***The Spy Who Loved Me*: you hardly ever get to see this chap at all in the game!**

12 FAMOUS FILM CONVERSIONS – WHAT WENT RIGHT (AND WHERE THEY WENT WRONG)

ROBOCOP 2

Publisher: Ocean
Programmers: Special F/X
Released: Christmas 1990

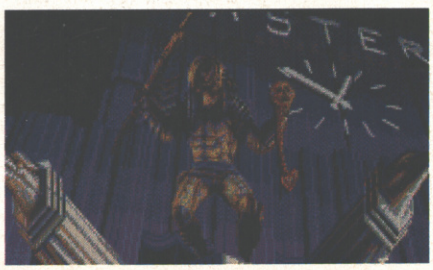
***Robocop 2*: relentless horizontally scrolling action.**

In a nutshell: You can't deny that this has better graphics and rather more variety than Ocean's original smash hit *Robocop* game, but it smacks uncomfortably of a programming-by-numbers job all the same. Occasionally twitchy controls and an offputting lack of restart points make progress less of a joy than it should be – this is, without a shadow of a doubt, a very tough game – and though presentation is good and slick, the highly relentless, samey nature gets wearing after a while. Certain points in the game prove almost impossible to pass consistently and see most players tearing their hair out in a nasty sort of frustration. Great sound though, and a very professional polished look – Special F/X normally do a good programming job, and this is no exception.
Looking backwards: Colin Gordon is project manager at Ocean, and worked on *Robo 2*: 'There were actually lots of versions of this game. A chap called Andrew Deakin here did the Speccy/Amstrad game design, Painting By Numbers came up with a totally different platform game style that made it onto the Nintendo and C64, while Special F/X came up with a more clunky, robotic feel for the 16-bits. The Amiga version is the most violent one, with the shoot-'em-up aspect much more prominent – it's hard to make any hard and fast rules about it, but different games designs often tend to work better on different machines. The sort of lighter, bouncy platform style that looks so good on the Nintendo doesn't seem quite appropriate to the Amiga.'

PREDATOR 2

Publisher: Image Works
Programmers: Arc Developments
Released: May 1991

In a nutshell: Very disappointingly, you can describe this 'film conversion' in two words – *Operation Wolf*. Taking its cue from the near future gang-war background to the film, this four level shoot-'em-up sees you as a wire-frame Danny Glover character blasting street gangs and drug barons for much of the game. Lots of baddies alright, but they all look and act much the same – and the Pred himself doesn't turn up until very late in the game. Simply very average, very seen-it-all-before, and sharing the movie's disturbing tendency to make all the bad guys black (still, the hero is too, so that's okay).
Looking backwards: Paul Walker is director at Arc Developments: 'The *Operation Wolf*-style game design was suggested by Mirrorsoft from the off, but we came up with the details of the game design. The Predator himself



***Predator 2* intro: would you believe it's next stop *Op Wolf*?**

doesn't appear in the early stages of the game because that's the way it worked in the film – we were trying to remain faithful to the source to some degree, but it turned out we were the only ones! 20th Century Fox actually started making some of their own suggestions for the game which included stuff that just doesn't appear in the film! At one stage they wanted fountains in the background which, when shot, splashed water on the Predator revealing where he was – goodness knows where they got that idea from, it certainly wasn't in the movie! Thinking about it now I'm not sure the *Op Wolf*-style was such a good idea – it's been done so many times before.'

BACK TO THE FUTURE PART 3

Publisher: Image Works
Programmers: Probe Software
Released: April 1991

In a nutshell: A bit limited and thin perhaps, but after the utter disaster of the first two *Back To The Future* games this caused huge sighs of relief all round. Built up, in traditional film conversion style, out of a series of sub-games based on suitable action scenes from the movie, we get an *Op Wolf* style shooting gallery, an isometric 3D pie-plate throwing affair, two versions of a horse-back chase/shoot-'em-up at the beginning, and a running-along-the-top-of-a-moving-train conclusion. This last bit is particularly thrilling/frustrating, but things keep to a consistent slightly-crap-but-good-fun-all-the-same standard throughout – even the normally-tricky-to-animate horses from the first bit look good. Lightweight but amusing, just like the movie.
Looking backwards: Jo Bonar of Probe was producer of the project: 'We hadn't seen the film at the time, but we knew it was a western and had a copy of the script, so we picked scenes from the film that sounded good and interpretated them with a good deal of artistic licence. We added baddies to the opening sequence with the horses for instance – they're not in the film – and turned a very brief pie-plate throwing moment into an entire sub-game. I'm particularly pleased that our shooting gallery bit, which ended up much like the film sequence.

'I think maybe why this game worked better than the other *Back To The Futures* is that it had a consistent theme – the Western one – which they lacked. *BTTF2* was all over the place – like the film – and too confusing, while the first one just plain wasn't any good'.

Oops! Creative use of artistic licence aids *BTTF Part III*.

***Predator 2*: classic shoot-'em-up movie, classic shoot-'em-up game.**

with the core elements of their various games, phone the programmers they decide they want for the job, talk it through with them and see if the basic idea is feasible, and then the two games will start to evolve in different directions. They'll evolve a lot too – to be honest, it's very rare that an original spec for a game will turn out anything like the finished product at all!'

Step 5

'The thing most people find really odd is that we've often never seen the film we're trying to reproduce the whole time we're working on the game versions. With something like *Alien III* it's not quite as bad as it can be, because we've got the first two films to give us the general idea, and will get still photographs and perhaps a few sketches from the film company during production.

'One nice thing that sometimes happens is that you get to visit the film set and see how things are doing. About half way through *Aliens III* we went to Pinewood where they're filming it, saw the technology and the settings and what the characters look like – the Aliens themselves are really scary, until you touch them and discover they're made of plastic! – and get a real feel for the film. We actually got to see a lot of the stuff we'd up until then only been visualising in our heads, and that helped out a great deal.'

Step 6

'And then, of course, the game gets finished and the film comes out. Of course, with *Aliens III* we're only half way through the project, and while they've finished the principle shooting on the film it's not been edited or anything yet, so we can't really tell yet how they compare – both are due around Easter next year, so it could be a long time before any of us can tell!'

HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO MAKE ONE GAME APPEAL TO PEOPLE ALL AROUND THE WORLD?

You don't – or rather, you have a lot of trouble doing it. Quite often, different computer formats end up with totally different games, even though they're all packaged and sold as the same. Check out *Robocop II* for instance (see *Robocop II* box) and it's going to be a similar situation with *Robocop III* – while Probe Software in Croydon are working on the 8-bit incarnations, Ocean have a very different (and by all accounts very impressive) solid 3D version being put together for the larger machines.

All this is a bit haphazard though – increasingly, software houses are aiming to get at least two version of the same licence ready to be sold side by side. It worked for US Gold/Lucasfilm with their two versions of *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade* (see box), and a similar split is being used for both *The Godfather* games and *Alien III*.

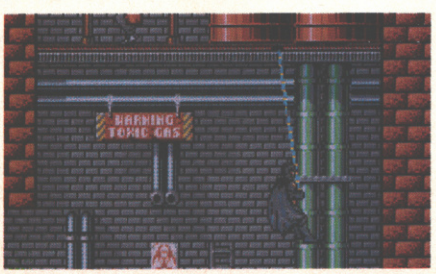
Here's Fergus McGovern of Probe again, commenting on his two versions of Mirrorsoft's *Alien III* : 'It used to be that someone like Mirrorsoft would just get the licence to a film property in Europe, but now they tend to acquire the world wide rights, so it's much more important to them that game design is right – there's even more money at stake than before! More specifically, they've got to make sure that the property performs to the best of its abilities across all computer formats and all territories, and it's fairly clear that that's a pretty tough order for any one game.

BATMAN

Publishers: Ocean
Programmers: In-house
Released: Christmas 1989

In a nutshell: By common consent, the best arcade-style movie conversion yet, and as good a representation as any of the (now perhaps over-familiar) Ocean way of doing film licences. *Batman* starts and finishes with massive, eight-way scrolling platform shoot-'em-ups, the *Bionic Commando*-like use of the bat-rope to swing around on adding a degree of character. These form the meat of the game, but the middle section isn't to be sniffed at either – two into-the-screen driving sections separated by a brief puzzle screen. Throughout graphics are suitable dark and moody, everything is executed well, and the timing was perfect – *Batman* (the game) rode in on the crest of the biggest buzz about a film in years.

Looking backwards: Colin Gordon of Ocean: 'At Ocean the general feeling was that we couldn't go wrong with this one – for a start, the film was such a hit, but I think we knew we had a winner in the game too. I think the reason it was so special is that people perceived the game as being good value – it was like having four individual full price games all in the one box. Though you might think it quite an easy film to convert, we still found there was quite a lot of planning to do on it – there are all sorts of sequences we toyed with but never included in the game. At one point we were even thinking about doing a vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up in the *Xenon 2* mould – it would have involved the Batwing attacking the Joker at the parade – but I'm glad we dropped it. The into-the-screen Batwing sequence we went with in the end was far more distinctive.'

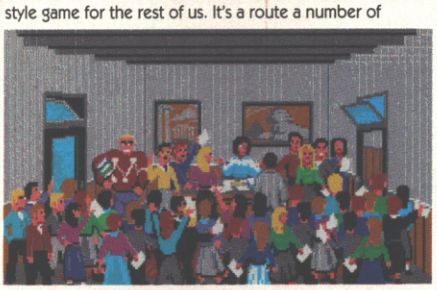


SwingalongaBats: distinctive platforming from Ocean hit.

INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE (ADVENTURE)

Publishers: Lucasfilm (US Gold)
Programmers: Ron Gilbert and Lucasfilm Games
Released: Mid 1989

In a nutshell: There were two *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade games* – a perfectly decent arcade-style platform romp put together by Tiertex and well worth a look in its own right, and then this, Lucasfilm's point-and-click adventure extravaganza. In many ways this points one way to the future for film licences – with single companies now starting to control the world rights to big films, at least two versions of the same film now look like being a Good Idea. There's the more sophisticated, cerebral approach for PC and older 16-bit owners, and the 8-bit/console/ arcade style game for the rest of us. It's a route a number of



Hmm. Graphics *aren't* the high point of *Indy* the adventure.

people are taking at the moment, not least US Gold with their forthcoming *Godfather* action/ adventure games.There's not much more to say here, really – *Indy And The Last Crusade* remains not only one of the best film-based games, but one of the best games of any type. A joy.

Looking backwards: Mike Wilding is Project Manager at US Gold: 'Well, obviously this was put together by Lucasfilm in the States, but unusually they'd send us demo versions and ask us to comment on it – particularly on the manual and some of the interactive stuff. It was very good and open of them really, and we were happy to help. Quite how much it really helped the game I'm not sure – after all, Lucasfilm know what they're doing – but it was nice to be asked.'

TOTAL RECALL

Publishers: Ocean
Programmers: In-house
Released: Early 1991

Odd cartoon-like sprites in the disappointing *Total Recall*.

In a nutshell: The point where the Ocean hit machine suddenly starts to look a little bit shaky. The cartoony, big-headed graphics are unusual, the horizontally scrolling driving sequences are generally poor, and while it all hangs together fairly well in a brainless platform shoot-'em-up sort of a way, it represents the non-stop-pace and constant pulling-the-rug-out-from-under-your-feet plot twists of the movie not at all. Unfriendly controls too. Not so much poor as just very formulaic and very, very average.

Looking backwards: Colin Gordon at Ocean: 'This one had a bit of a troubled history. Active Minds, a Manchester-based programming group, submitted a good game design and they started work on the project, but as things progressed it became clear that they were slipping quite a long way from the original concept, not to mention going late. In the end the project was finished in-house, and ended up rather more of a compromise than we would have liked – it wasn't bad, but the game could have been an awful lot better. Originally it was going to have rather more depth than we ended up with – one nice idea we never implemented was having the action freeze and then retreat from you until it was revealed that someone was watching the whole proceedings on a monitor. Then the picture would expand again, un-freeze itself, and you'd be back in the action – it helped create the feeling of paranoia and that nothing was what it seemed that permeated the film.'

'Because of that, we decided with this new *Alien* that we needed to do two sorts of game – an arcade-style action game, and a more sophisticated 3D arcade adventure/strategy product. The second one is looking very exciting. While I can't tell you much about it, but the atmosphere is much more like the first film than the second, so there's going to be lots of that very tense walking around corridors stuff, never knowing quite what you're going to find around the next corner – or above you or behind you for that matter! The idea that you can come up with a 3D game of the same sort of quality as, say, *Cybercon III* – but with Aliens in! – is very exciting indeed!'

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE FILM PEOPLE CHANGE THE STORY AND DON'T TELL YOU?

This can be a real problem when you're trying to make a game out of a film that doesn't even exist yet! One classic example is with Ocean's *Nightbreed*. Colin Gordon of Ocean explains: 'Despite the fact that we had quite close ties with the director Clive Barker and the movie in general, this proved a difficult project. It was quite a risk for Ocean to take it on at all – the whole idea sounded great on paper, but it was never very clear how much the finished product was meant to be a horror film, how much it was an action adventure, and how much weight all this mystic and/or psychological stuff should have.

'In many ways the ideas behind it were a bit too complicated and involved to transfer to the action game format at all – I actually think the less well known interactive movie version was more of a success, since it could reflect events of the film more clearly and put you right into the main character's shoes.

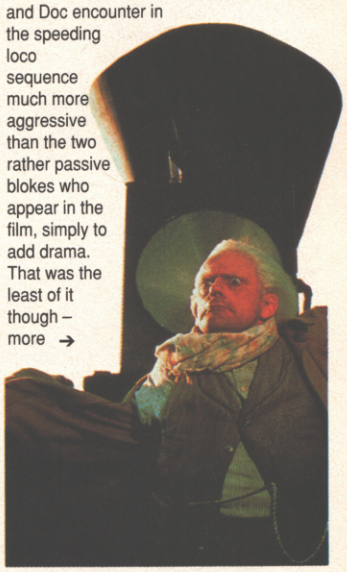
'The real problem, though, was not only did we have a very complicated story, with a number of different elements, we also had a plot that kept changing. The goalposts seemed to be moving all the time. For instance, in the script the local sheriff and his men were made out to be a bunch of neo-Nazis called The Sons Of The Free or something – and that's how we depicted them – while in the film they just come across as a bunch of rednecks (see *Nightbreed* box). Worse, we have chief baddy Doctor Decker/The Mask die at the end, but the film put in a sort of twist ending where he comes back to life again right at the end which we knew nothing about! Thus the game and the film have totally different endings, which isn't exactly an ideal situation.'

HOW MUCH ARTISTIC LICENCE CAN YOU TAKE?

Now this is a tricky one – as a game developer you're obviously caught between two stools. On the one hand, you're doing your best to make a good, playable, satisfying game of the thing, while on the other you've got to represent the film properly (not to mention get everything approved by the powers that be at the software house that's going to publish the game, the film company who own the original property, and even – increasingly – the agents of the main actors who star in the film!)

When working on *Back To The Future Part III*, Jo Bonar of Probe played fast and loose with the actual plot of the film. 'We found we could make all sorts of minor changes to the storyline in *Back To The Future Part III*,' he explained, 'and nobody would mind. They certainly helped add to the game.

'On a subtle – well, fairly subtle! – level we made the two train drivers Marty and Doc encounter in the speeding loco sequence much more aggressive than the two rather passive blokes who appear in the film, simply to add drama. That was the least of it though – more →



THE UNTOUCHABLES

Publishers: Ocean
Programmers: In-house
Released: Christmas 1989

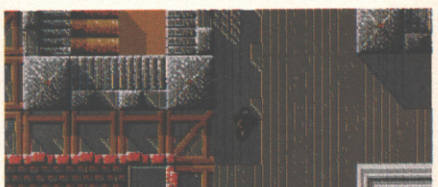
Warehouse shoot-'em-up from early in *The Untouchables*.

In a nutshell: The episodic nature of the film makes it less of an obvious candidate for computerisation than some of Ocean's efforts, resulting in a rather different style of game. Built up from six very different stages (though all could broadly be described as shoot-'em-ups in one way or another) and lacking distinctive comic book-style characters (set in '30s Chicago, it's populated by lots of men in raincoats and trilbies), it's perhaps not very well focused, but it does make a brave attempt at representing all the action scenes from the film, incorporating some sideways scrollers, some *Operation Wolf*-style scenes, and an interesting overhead viewed bit.
Looking backwards: Colin Gordon of Ocean: 'This was all done in house, with an awful lot of people working on it in a very structured way. When you watch the film certain scenes stick in your mind, and we tried to recreate all of those, which is why there are so many different sections. One of the advantages of doing an older film like this is that there's less of a risk that your game is going to come out nothing like the film – we had videos of the movie around that everybody could watch. I think we did a successful job on this one, considering the constraints – I don't think you'll ever get what you could really call innovative software out of film conversions, but you can still get good, characterful action games. You've always got to have a good guy and a bad buy and stick to a pre-set look and events, but within those constraints there's a lot you can do.'

MOONWALKER

Publisher: US Gold
Programmers: Emerald Software, now defunct.
Release: Christmas 1989

In a nutshell: Oh – as they say – dear. It's hard to know where to begin with this one really – the dreadful fantasy film-cum-Michael Jackson promotional vehicle that it's based on doesn't do the programmers any favours, it's true, but they've decided to try and stay true to the movie, rather than junk much of the plot and concentrate on building a good game around the Michael Jackson character, and that has to be a mistake. Two very sparse looking overhead scrolling chase things, an odd *Op Wolf* lookalike and, erm, another thing don't a great game make. In retrospect, they'd have been better junking faithfulness to the film and going for a straight action game (a la the excellent Sega Megadrive *Moonwalker* version).



Early chase sequence from *Moonwalker*: where's Michael?

Looking backward: Mike Wilding of US Gold: 'If you take the songs away, the film breaks down into a number of simple sequences, and we just took what we felt were the strongest of these and converted them over. One problem we encountered was that the film people were very keen we didn't portray Michael Jackson in a more violent light than he is in the film, so he wasn't allowed to kill anyone in the early levels – that's why they took on that overhead view puzzle aspect. Only when they got to the Club 30s sequence – when he does kill one person in the film – were we allowed to introduce a shoot-'em-up element. Of course, by the end of the movie he's blasting people down left, right and centre, so no problem.'

NIGHTBREED

Publishers: Ocean
Programmers: Painting By Numbers
Released: Late 1990

In a nutshell: Despite Ocean's unusually close ties to the film – a heavily made-up Gary Bracey actually appears in a crowd scene as a monster! – the action game, like the film, tended towards the poor side of, erm, 'poor'. Abandoning Ocean's usual lots-of-different-levels approach, the odd running-around-a-map-and-trying-to-deal-with-the-creatures-you-find design fails to work because a) as in the film, you're not quite sure whether you're meant to think of the monsters as good guys or bad guys, confusing matters, and b) it's a bit intrinsically crap anyway.
Looking backwards: Colin Gordon of Ocean: 'There were originally meant to be three versions of this – the action game, a sort of Cinemaware-style interactive movie and the role playing game, though in the end only the first two came out. I think some of the flaws of the action game certainly are the flaws of the movie – in the script, the Chief Of Police and his men were described as a bunch of neo-Nazis, and that's how we portrayed them, but in the film they just came across as a bunch of stupid rednecks who had some mysterious supply of military-style guns. The whole thing about whether the monsters were good guys or bad guys sounds very intriguing on paper, but when you actually get down to making a game of the idea it doesn't quite work – in the end, the monsters and the rednecks both appeared as baddies for Boone, the hero, to get past, and it all got rather confusing.
'That's why I think many people prefer the interactive movie version – it's easier to portray a complicated movie, or one that works on a number of levels, in this way.'

Mm, nice haircut: *Nightbreed* – the interactive movie.

outrageously we utterly made up a whole host of baddies who attack the Doc in the first part of the game! None of them appear at all in the film – goodness knows where they came from! To be honest, that runaway buckboard sequence sounded very exciting in the film script when we first planned the game, so we were a bit surprised to see the movie and find it hardly lasted any time at all.

'The nice thing was that the film company were suggesting things we could do with the game all the time – making such a big deal of the pie-plate throwing sequences was their idea, for instance, and it worked well. The problem in computer games terms with Marty McFly is that he's a totally non-violent character, so you can't have him shooting anybody. The pie plates were ideal – violent, yet not violent at the same time. Nobody at Lucasfilm seemed to mind all the jokes we incorporated into the shooting gallery sequence either, though I was slightly disappointed when Steven Spielberg rejected one of my ideas. I wanted to have a little ET ride past the moon on a bicycle at one point, but I guess he thought it was too silly!'

On the other hand, you can't muck around with something so much that you lose the integrity of the product. 'People have to believe in it still,' explains John Kavanagh of The Kremlin. 'In *The Spy Who Loved Me* we could get away with quite a lot – we added a speed boat chase that doesn't really appear in the film, for instance, and turned the underwater sequence into a sort of *Xenon II!* – but that worked because it's acceptable within the concept of Bond. Much as we might have liked to, we couldn't have had a giant squid or something come down and attack 007's Lotus – people would have just thought it was silly!'

***Turtles*: unrelated game and film**

SO WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE US?

Well, to be honest, I'm not really sure. It's certainly clear that there'll always be good or bad film conversions, just as there will always be good or bad of any sort of game. What does seem increasingly obvious though is that as more and more UK companies find they're competing on the much less forgiving world stage (not just in cosy old Europe) it becomes more important than ever that they get the game exactly right.

One thing that seems almost inevitable is that having two versions of the same licence will become much more common – and will result in some very good games. The high-end versions are perhaps the most exciting – the potential profits to be made from an Indy Jones adventure as good as *Monkey Island*, or an *Aliens III* game as good as *Cybercon III*, are incredible, which makes it well worth publisher's while to provide the right programmers with the time and support to do it – something which has to be good news for the games player.

As far as the action games are concerned, it seems clear (or at least, it seems clear to us) that a) you've really got to have the main character from the film in the centre of the screen the whole time for identification's sake alone, not hide him in cars or rabbit suits and b) that one consistent game mechanic provides a far more pleasing and cohesive game, one that'll work on its own terms without the film link being necessary at all. (After all, film makers play fast and loose with novels when they transfer them to their medium, and it makes sense for games creators to do exactly the same in turn).

The challenge – this making something that's a success in one medium really work in another business – is a lot older than computer games, and at last it seems like publishers and developers are tackling it head on. Let's settle back and see what they come up with, eh?

GHOSTBUSTERS II

Publishers: Activision
Programmers: Foursfield, who more recently completed *Brat* for Image Works
Released: Christmas 1989

In a nutshell: Absolutely dire, and as clear an example as you could possibly hope for of the potential dangers you're up against doing film conversions. Quite clearly, the putting-together-a-series-of-limited-sub-games approach just doesn't work – or at least, it doesn't when the sub-games are as thin and limited as they are here. Sadly, this fails to work as either a representation of the film (despite the nice digitised pics 'explanation' pics that appear between levels, if you hadn't seen the movie you wouldn't have had the faintest idea what was going on) or as a game in its own right – the scene the first sub-game was based on (swinging on a rope down into a ghost infested sewer) was all but cut from the film, while the rampaging Statue Of Liberty from later on is spectacular, but gives you too little to do. The last bit – an all out assault on the chief ghost – involves some tricky climbing slowly down ropes stuff (your weedy little Ghostbusters are apparently killed by any drop of more than about three feet), meaning nine times out of ten you're never going to get to the climax at all. Lots (and lots) of disk swapping too make it not only dull experience, but a frustrating one too. The current groundswell of opinion in the AMIGA POWER office has it that the game in fact provides a perfect reflection of the movie – that was utterly crap too!

Looking backwards: Activision no longer exists in the form it did then, leaving only programming team Foursfield to provide any insight into the development of this game. Unfortunately they refused to comment at all.

***Ghostbusters II*: this scene hardly appears in the movie.**

THE SPY WHO LOVED ME

Publisher: Domark
Programmers: The Kremlin
Released: Christmas 1990

In a nutshell: *Licence To Kill* aside, the only halfway decent Bond game. Taking the Lotus-cum-submarine that was the star of the film, and building a *Spy Hunter* style vertically scrolling shoot-'em-up around it, this game gets away from the combination-of-thin-sub-games-adding-up-to-nothing-very-much-at-all problem that bugs so many film conversions. Occasional puzzle and *Op Wolf*-style sequences spoil the continuity a bit, and the far-away-from-the-action viewpoint prevents the Bond character really coming through, but generally a successful game – if one that that doesn't really try and reflects the bulk of the movie at all.

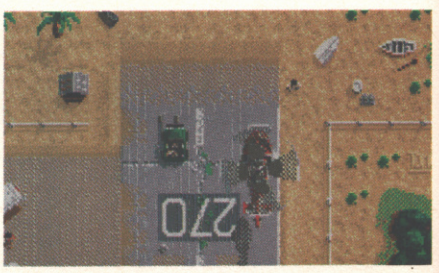
Looking backwards: John Kavanagh heads up The Kremlin, Domark's in-house programming team: 'This was a very successful game – the Bond stuff always does well, and tends to translate well onto compilations too. I quite like the fact we came full circle with this one. Everyone commented that the game was influenced by the *Spy Hunter* coin-op, and yes, it was – what they didn't say was that *Spy Hunter* was loosely based on the film *The Spy Who Loved Me* in the first place, so it was sort of poetic justice.

***The Spy Who Loved Me*: *Spy Hunter* comes full circle.**

'When doing a film licence we like to concentrate on just the one game mechanic – in this case a vertically scrolling driving game – and base the game around it. I'm not convinced by this lots-of-totally-different-sub-games approach at all – you tend to get lots of little crap segments as opposed to a proper game.'

LICENCE TO KILL

Publisher: Domark
Programmers: The Kremlin
Released: Autumn 1989



***Licence To Kill*: Neat game, but where's Bond?**

In a nutshell: James Bond hasn't been treated well by computer games. In fact, they've generally been crap, failing to capture the character, the outrageous action sequences and the general feel of what have to be the most eminently convertible series of films of all time. This one, cut up into six distinct vertically-scrolling parts reflecting sequences from the film, plays well in a limited sort of a way, but the viewpoint allows little Bond character to come across, and the general 'down to earth' feel of the film makes the whole proceedings seem very ordinary. Not bad by any stretch of the imagination, but one that fails to really capture the spirit of Bond.

Looking backwards: John Kavanagh of The Kremlin: 'The Bond people are very security conscious – I was allowed to read a copy of the script, but I wasn't allowed to take one with me. I guess that's so that if I decided to sell the story to the papers I'd have no evidence to back it up! We did get lots of still photos of all the scenes though, and we studied them in some depth – I think we got the look of the movie spot on. Again, we decided on a single game mechanic – another overhead view scroller – which seemed to work for all the scenes we wanted to use. At one point we toyed with doing a horizontal scroller instead, but Ocean have done so many of those I'm a bit sick of them, and anyway, at the time the Speccy and Amstrad were a lot more important than they are now and since they don't work too well at horizontal scrolling that had to be a consideration. If we tackled the game again it might be different'.

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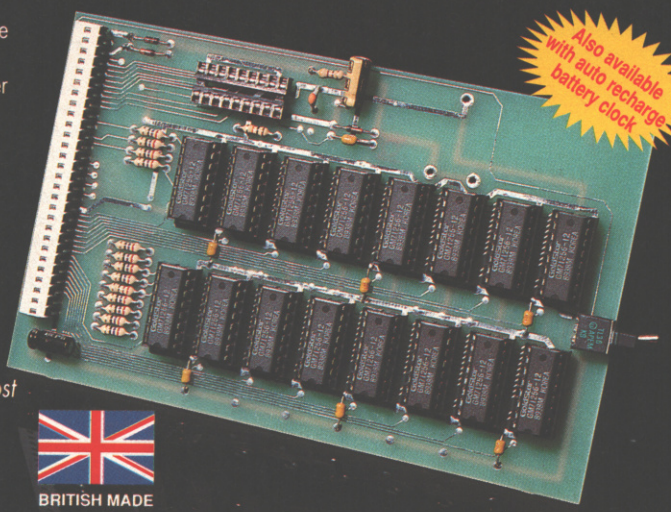

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GAME REVIEWS

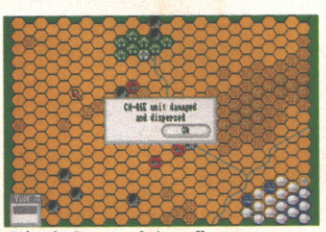
CONTINUED

Welcome the AMIGA POWER games review section (Part Two). Budget games reviews start on page 80, and our PD coverage on page 85, but first let's get on with the rest of this month's full price releases...

BRIGADE COMMANDER

Publisher: Electronic Zoo
Authors: TTR Development
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

Brigade Commander is billed as 'a new concept in computer wargaming', with the following justification: it's played in real time. It also comes with a built-in editor, as seems to be the fashion these days, and a whole range of different scenarios. Half of these are supplied on the accompanying *Operation Desert Storm* data disk and are based on the events of earlier this year, in which four of the game's authors apparently saw service.



***Brigade Commander's* really very interesting hex-map display.**

So what's all this about 'real time'? Well, traditionally, wargames are more or less direct transcriptions of their paper-based counterparts, meaning that each side has to take it in turns to move and attack. While you're doing that the computer sits back and lets you get on with it, and once you've finished you do the same for the computer.

Brigade Commander does away with such courtesies. It's every man for himself, so while you're sitting there wondering whether to hide your tank division in the forest or make a break for the coast, the computer's units have very likely outflanked it and wiped it off the face of the earth. (The basts.) It's a system that works very well, and adds an element of urgency to what is undoubtedly the most boring sort of game of all.

In fact, the whole thrust (if you will) of this game is one of streamlining and simplifying. Most of the game's operations have been cut down to reduce the amount of time you have to spend faffing about with lists of numbers. Clicking on a hex – the map is built up from these – brings up a list of the friendly units on it, along with a list of of the actions they can perform. If you want to move some of them, for example, click on the relevant units, select Move and then trace out the path you'd like them to follow. Attacking is similarly straightforward. Underneath this apparent simplicity, however, are enough complex strategies and options to keep the most hardened of pros happy. All the usual types of unit are catered for (and you can, of course, design your own) along with such obscurities as mine-laying and cargo-carrying.

It's nice to see so much thought being put into a wargame – they're usually just endless rehashes of existing games. The result is something which deserves a much wider audience than it's likely to get. Call it blasphemy, but I reckon if they put a bit more work into the presentation they might even sell a few copies.

(Now please – don't make me review any more of the blooming things.) • *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE

On the surface just another wargame, but its approachability makes for a refreshing change. One meg only though, and the graphics are (as ever) crap.

68 PERCENT

PROFLIGHT

Publisher: Hi Soft
Author: Nick Brown
Price: £39.95
Release: Out now

As even it's manual points out, *ProFlight* is hardly the most innovative game ever; it's a flight sim, and in all

MAUPITI

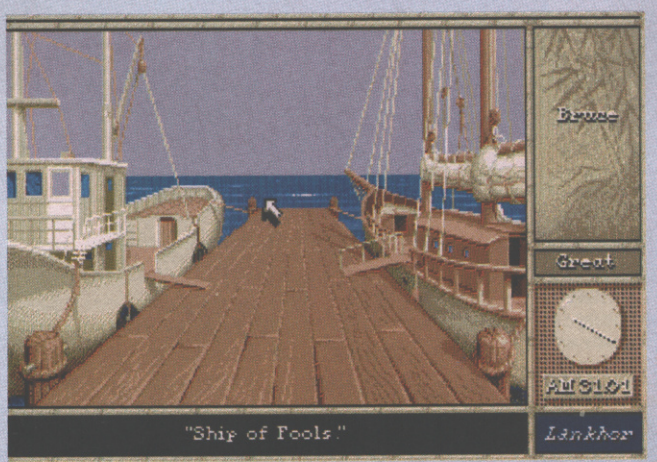
Publisher: Lankhor
Price: £25.99
Authors: D Sablons, Sylvian (script), A Bescond (sound)
Release: Out now

Unusual, atmospheric and just a little bit

Uh-oh, it's a graphical adventure from some people who have absolutely nothing to do with Lucasfilm! The temptation is to kick off with lots of unfavourable comparisons with a certain *The Secret of Monkey Island*, but I'll try and resist it. Better not to get bogged down in a compare and contrast syndrome, but give this French yarn a fair hearing in its own right.

As with all point and click 'thrillers' the plot is nigh impossible to avoid, so I may as well start with that. You play a leisurely seafarer skipping around the Indian Ocean in the early 1950s. All's going swimmingly until you stop off at (surprise, surprise!) Maupiti Island for a cool shandy and get yourself embroiled (surprise, even-more-surprise!) in all sorts of intrigue.

The first thing you discover is that some poor girl's been kidnapped. Naturally, being the adventurous type, you get straight down to a spot of detective work, exploring the locality and interviewing the dozen or so inhabitants of the island. You discover the usual group of suspects – mad communists, raving homosexuals, gorgeous housemaids, disillusioned young men from Europe and, of course, the obligatory mysterious old fisherman.

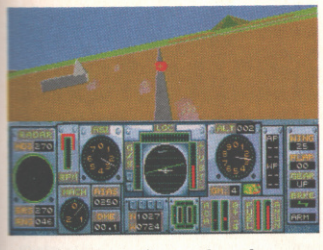


Onto the pier for some snooping around. It's not wise to hang around though – the locals don't take kindly to nosy beggars.

There's not too much searching to be done, since at least one of these bonkers characters shows up at every turn. Interaction is good though – you can talk to them by picking any one of about twenty questions, you can follow them, you can bribe them, you can even indulge yourself and give them a good old fashioned beating. We wouldn't recommend it though – the latter option might be a lot of fun, but you're running a huge risk of ending up with the contents of your head plastered all over some bar-room wall. As you might expect, Maupiti Island falls short of a five star rating in the hospitality stakes.

It all sounds suitably intriguing, doesn't it, but how well does it actually work as a game? Well, you first thing you have to say is that it's illustrated deliciously, punctuated with some charming sound effects and music which give the whole affair a leisurely, almost holiday-like feel. It certainly rates highly in the atmosphere stakes.

Gameplay-wise it works quite well too. I usually have a big problem with graphical adventures – they rarely let you do just what you want, and I tend to get frustrated. Here, however, if you want to look at something (even the most humdrum object) you



Going in for a strafing run through a (rather spacious) village. The church on the left is a nice touch.

fairness there are tons of flight sims already available for virtually every known breed of home computer ever invented. (Even the BBC).

Actually 'tons' of flight sims is quite an appropriate collective noun to use because, as someone once said, you can tell how good a flight sim is by how much it weighs. *ProFlight* comes in at a slightly disappointing 1 1/2 lbs (700 grammes) though, so (as the theory concludes), it looks like it's little to get excited about.

The author explains in the blurb that his reason for writing such a game was that he wanted to create a flight sim that isn't stifled by the simplicity of others. And you must admit, he has succeeded. Here you get to pretend that you're piloting a Panavia Tornado, one of the fastest aircraft in the world, and yes, I can't deny it, it all seems extremely realistic. In fact, far, far too realistic.

Okay, let's play the game. First you select your way through a few menus (tweaking absolutely everything envisageable), give your plane the once over and a number of one-key presses later you're airborne. Now you can select the map, set a destination, flick on the auto-pilot, and sit back and relax. The graphics are fast, but not outstandingly stunning (you can have different around-plane views, though), so how about a glance at the manual to find out exactly what can be accomplished?

Here you'll find over 160 pages of information explaining everything from how to pull off various complicated manoeuvres (barrel rolls or stall turns, anybody?) to to graphs illustrating the 'drag co-efficient' (whatever that is). The snag is, you see, that as pointed at before, *ProFlight* is so accurate down to the very last detail that it has become more like a serious simulator real fighter pilots would use, and far less of an enjoyable computer game. More evidence backing this up is the combat option – it sounds pretty good but, unless you've had considerable flying practice, it's a joke.

For serious flight sim buffs with excessive amounts of patience, *ProFlight* will no doubt be fulfiling their wildest dreams. But for everyone else? A bit of a nightmare, really. • *RICH PELLEY*

THE BOTTOM LINE

An overly complicated, visually unimpressive and off-puttingly expensive flight sim which is far more of a sim than a game. It has a reasonable amount to offer, but only if you stick at it. (And it's got horrible business program-like packaging too).

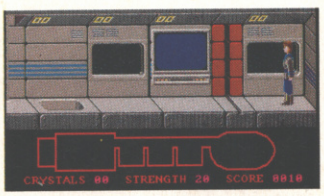
52 PERCENT

DISCOVERY

Publisher: Micro Illusions
Price: £25.99
Authors: Sylvan Technical Arts
Release: Out now

'An interactive, educational space adventure.' That's the only clue I was given that this, the latest in AMIGA POWER's hate campaign against me, is (please, no) a game for the younger player. How much younger isn't specified, and neither is the exact nature of the education promised to the lucky infant

At the heart of *Discovery* is a walk-around-collecting-things game. The idea is that you're aboard a spaceship which has run into trouble, and you've got to salvage it by collecting fuel crystals which are scattered around its decks. And then there's the 'education'. Every so often you'll come up against a security door. To get through it a question needs to be answered, the type of which is selected from a menu at the start of the game. There are questions on spelling and maths



Arcade adventuring rubs shoulders with education in *Discovery* – and gets us absolutely nowhere.

of varying degrees of difficulty, and, erm, flags. Get the answer right and the door will open. Get it wrong and you'll be given the answer and the chance to try again.

There are three main problems, as I see it. Firstly, although the process of walking from left to right and going up and down ladders sounds simple enough, I couldn't get to grips with the control method and kept falling down holes and dropping off ladders. If I can't do it it's hard to see how this 'younger player' is going to fare much better.

Secondly, the program makes extensive use of the Amiga's built in speech synthesiser. That's right, the one supplied on your Workbench disk which you probably loaded up briefly on Day One and immediately wrote off as a useless curiosity. The result is that our prospective student is likely to be asked such questions as 'Speeell Wmphthstlmph'.

And thirdly, and perhaps most fundamentally, this whole business of asking questions and marking them right or wrong hardly marks the latest advance in educational techniques. There's more to educational software than quiz show-style questions and answers. • *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE

An unimaginative crack at the tricky educational market. Someone, somewhere must be coming up with better ideas than this.

52 PERCENT

French, this is not your run-of-the-mill game.

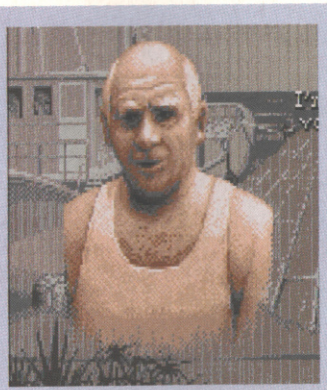
ISLAND

usually can. Just bumbling around the locations in the game checking everything out can be nearly as much fun as unearthing deadly secrets or whatever.

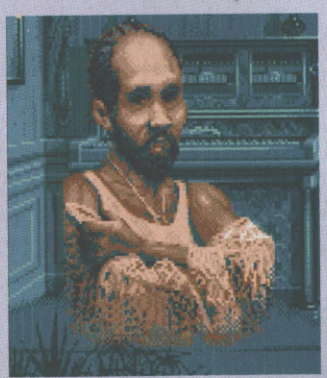
Of course, there is a downside to all this. There's no way that *Maupiti Island* is going to give you more than (maybe) a dozen hours entertainment – it's simply too small. Still, for mellow types who get their kicks watching Sunday afternoon movies or walking in parks, this provides an excellent alternative to rabid death rushes or sugary platform games.

To sum up, here is a small and almost perfectly formed game full of lovely visuals, interesting characters, and providing a limited smattering of action and suspense. Yes, I'm afraid it can be summed up by one of the blandest words in the dictionary – it's nice. (And no, it's not as good as *Monkey Island*). • *COLIN CAMPBELL*

Go about your business by selecting the menus at the top. Ignore the messages at the bottom the screens – these are just window dressings.



On our first meeting Bruce reveals that he's never 'been with' a girl. Oh dear!



It's the mysterious fisherman. He's very religious (and a more than a bit spooky).

THE BOTTOM LINE

Charmingly quirky French adventure but too tiny to be a classic. It's obviously been crafted with care, attention and a splash of love – worth a look if you can afford a little luxury.

73 PERCENT

TANGRAM

Publisher: Thalion
Price: £25.53
Author: Thomas Behrends
Release: Out now

Tangram is an Amiga version of an ancient Chinese puzzle game of the same name, one which more traditionally involves wooden blocks and various 'frames'. The idea is to fill various patterns by placing your blocks in the frames (the shapes of which are always the same, though their numbers can change), so that all the frame is completely covered without overlapping. It's a very simple concept, and has been converted for computer use without expanding upon it, except for the rather crap addition of a time limit for each of the 200 screens supplied.

Control is very easy – the pieces are moved around with the mouse, rotated with a mouse button, and placed with the other button – and the Amiga puts its spare processor time to good use with some pleasantly oriental-type tunes. The question is, are these enough to justify buying the Amiga version instead of spending a few quid on a wooden-block original? And, let's be honest, it isn't. The Amiga is incredibly picky about having the block positioning pixel-perfect, but other than that gratuitous irritation it's practically invisible – you don't gain by playing it on a computer at all.

With most board game conversions, you at least get a computer opponent, but that isn't applicable here and it makes buying the game in software form something of a waste of time and money. It's not that *Tangram* is a bad game – the wooden original has a lot to be said for it – but this computer variant is utterly pointless. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

Picking up the pieces in Tangram – yet another board game which the Chinese have supposedly being playing for hundreds of years.

THE BOTTOM LINE

A perfectly competent programming job, but the worst idea for a board-to-computer translation yet. *Tangram* is great, but get the real thing.

40 PERCENT

CHAMPION OF THE RAJ

Publisher: Image Works
Price: £25.99
Authors: Level 9
Release: Out now

A game set in my favourite Indian restaurant? Apparently not, as soon became clear when I studied the box more closely. It's actually set in India in 1800, when Queen Victoria was a mere twinkle in her mother's eye and the country was split into several warring kingdoms ruled by people like the British East India Company, the Marathas, the Sikhs and a few minor players like the French.

So, we've got a country divided into lots of territories, and they're all fighting each other. What do you reckon you've got to do? That's right, pick a side and try to conquer everyone else. As a true patriot, I, of course, plumped for the British (erm, actually they're the easiest to win with), and it's possible to have up to five chums playing the rest. The battle takes place on the rather titchy map in the middle of the screen, which can be scrolled up (painfully slowly, and with much disk accessing) to reveal a set of icons underneath. Attacking a neighbouring kingdom is a case of clicking on it and selecting the 'attack' icon. Unless the computer decides otherwise you've then got to lead your army into battle, which means clicking on more icons as the battle progresses to tell them when to charge, retreat and all the rest of it.

As you might expect, there are the inevitable 'arcade sequences' which crop up every so often – sword fights, shoot-'em-ups, elephant races, I'm sure you know the routine. And I hardly need tell you that you'll need to keep an eye on your cashflow in order to finance your operations, buying more troops when necessary. The real question is: how is it actually different from *Defender of the Crown*, which it's obviously quite closely related to? Well, it's set in India

With only three British flags pinned on the map, things aren't looking too hopeful.

(obviously), the graphics are a lot more garish (sorry, full of 'rich native colours') and the animated sequences tend to be a bit lumpen. Oh, and the music's crap. (It even slows down when a lot's happening on-screen.)

That said though, the similarities are strong, and sadly one of them is *Defender of the Crown*'s rather unfortunate playability problem – neither game has a great deal. The trouble is that buried underneath all the graphics and stuff (into which a lot of effort has obviously gone) is a very simple strategy game that doesn't really merit more than a few minutes play. (Well, certainly not more than an hour or two, anyway.) Shame, that. • *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE

It has its moments, but falls headlong into the old 'not enough to it' trap. The arcadey bits are okay, but they're like a sitting room without a settee.

57 PERCENT

Mix hordes of the undead with *Operation Wolf*, and the result is...

BEAST BUSTERS

Publisher: Activision
Price: £25.99
Authors: Henry S. Clark, Ken Jarvis, Matthew Symmons, Andy Pang
Release: Out now

Bullets, molotov cocktails and zombie limbs fly. Better collect that bullet belt before your ammo runs out!

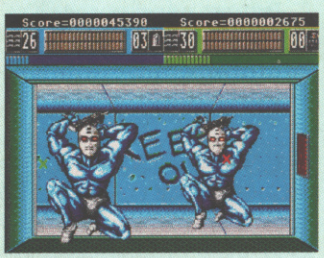
And this month's *Operation Wolf* clone is...

I've never been a fan of the arcade gun games, but *Beast Busters* was one that I *did* pump a good deal of cash into. The three-player option, the touches of humour (watch out for the birdmen on the third level, that's all I'm saying) and the zombie gore factor (bits of bloodied corpses flying around like snow in a blizzard) made it much more fun than the usual hormone-substitute snoozerama, and a trip to the seaside was never complete without a quick slaughter of the undead. (And then we used to go and play some video games, but that's another story).

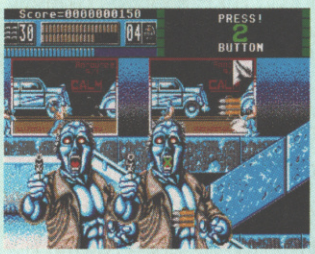
Anyway, this long-awaited conversion has been rescued from the ashes of Activision UK, and boasts all the features of the coin-op, except for the three-player capability (the maximum here is two). The graphics have been very authentically reproduced, and all the original levels are included for that authentic full-scale massacre experience. This is one conversion that looks very like the original. That's not normally the big problem with coin-op conversions, though – the real question is usually over the gameplay, so how well does *Beast Busters* hold up?

Well, Amiga *Beast Busters* plays very much like arcade *Beast Busters* – or, at least, like arcade *Beast Busters* would if you used to bung two quid into the arcade machine at a time. In common with many Amiga conversions, you get several 'credits' to play with (five in this case), and with *BB*, by the time you've used them all up you've completed half of the game on your first go.

The difficulty level is very badly-judged, being extremely low until certain points where a particular enemy will leap out and kill you in two seconds flat (no exaggeration). In fact, it's not so much of a difficulty curve, more like one of those lines you get on heart monitoring machines in TV hospital programmes, where the little dot moves along quite sedately, then suddenly leaps up to a peak with a high-pitched 'ping', and settles back down to a straight line again. This makes the game very short on lastability, as most people will complete it on the first day or get bored trying. *Beast Busters* is another competent conversion job, and certainly looks very nice, but even devotees of the original won't really get their money's worth out of it. • *STUART CAMPBELL*



Ninja zombies? Well, what did you expect? Realism? (Even George Romero never made things quite like this).



Aim that green gunsight right in that zombie's mouth, and get ready for a splattering of flying flesh. (Charming).

THE BOTTOM LINE

Technically flawed (it slows down when there's a lot happening) but basically sound translation that's just too easy to be a good way to spend £26.

62 PERCENT

CHAOS IN ANDROMEDA

Publisher: On-Line Entertainment
Price: £24.99
Authors: Kirk Marino
Release: Out now

It'd be pretty worrying if, whilst munching your way through an early morning bowl of Honey Nut Loops, you received a letter from the future informing you that you are about to be transported through time and space, on a top-secret mission to rescue the important Mr Yai and save the planet of Andromeda.

In the real world as we know it this is very unlikely to happen, but in the made-up fantasy world of computer games it could well take place. In fact it just has, and in an icon-driven role-playing adventure sort of way. At first glance you probably won't see much, as everything is extremely small, including your character and objects which are so tiny that they're not even shown. The scrolling really is an embarrassment too. But graphics aren't what's important here – it's gameplay.

The less-than-impressive main scrolling map screen of *Chaos In Andromeda*.

And luckily the gameplay is far more complaint-free. The trick, you see, is to build up your powers, use objects and solve puzzles to negotiate your way through the huge playing area – without (naturally) doing something stupid, such as falling from a bridge or getting yourself attacked by other characters. Partially you want to avoid being attacked because the fight sequences are so crap, and partially because, since you don't have 'lives' as such, a lot of save-gaming has to take place as insurance in case you get hopelessly killed.

However, let's not be too picky. When all's said and done, I rather enjoyed *Chaos*. There's far more to it than I've got room to mention here. Take the robots, for example, which you move about as separate characters. I haven't got room to mention them. Nor can I squeeze in a word or two about the considerable interaction with other characters. I'd love to go on and on for ages (more money, you see) but I won't. I'll stop there, and think of something to put in the Bottom Line box. • *RICH PELLEY*

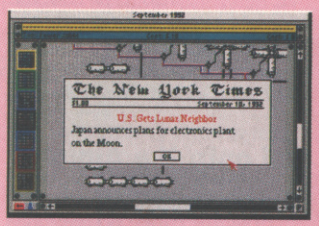
THE BOTTOM LINE

An enjoyable adventure game, marred rather heavily by the slightly crap graphics, the lack of originality and the slightly thoughtless programming.

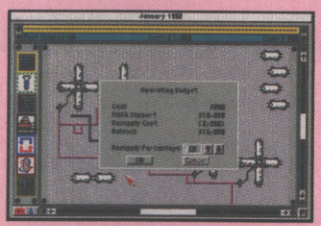
68 PERCENT

When even a whole city isn't big enough, the sky's the limit...

MOONBASE



It looks like the Japanese are going to become leaders in colonisation too!



It just goes to show, not all management games need to be about football.

Publisher: Mindscape
Price: £35.99
Authors: Wesson International
Release: Out now

You've built your own city in *Sim City*. You've gone on to run the world in *Sim Earth* (well, you have if you've got a PC) and countless other games. There's only one place left unoppressed. It's time to glance warily skywards, screw on your helmet and head for... the moon.

It's cold, quiet and covered in craters, but in no time at all you'll have discovered the necessary combination of menus and icons you'll need to continue, started smoothing things out and shoved up buildings all over the place. These can be picked from a wide range of structures, from habitation modules and laboratories to recreation facilities and greenhouses (for growing food). What you put where is up to you, but there ought to be a method to your madness – everything'll grind to a halt unless it's plumbed into a decent smattering of power generators and heat extractors. Manpower is important too. There needs to be enough people to run everything, and they've all got to be accommodated and fed. The other headache is finance. To start of with you receive an annual grant from NASA, but this soon dries up so you'll need to become self-sufficient as fast as poss. Cash has to be generated by building mining and manufacturing facilities, and these in turn need to be staffed and powered and... it's a complete nightmare, it really is.

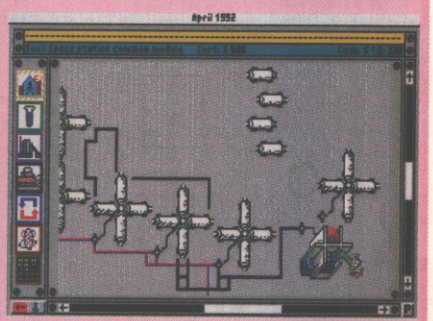
Sounds a bit boring, doesn't it? But it's not! As with all these 'build a world' games, *Moonbase* is deceptively addictive. Once you've worked out what's going on (the manual's not terribly helpful here, mainly consisting of a dire novella interspersed with tips and a short summary at the back) it's almost impossible to put it down. There's an enormous amount of depth to it, and everything's been finely balanced so you're constantly teetering on the brink of disaster. I've only got two major criticisms: a) as your creation gets bigger, the monthly update slows down horrendously, and b) having built a fully self-sufficient moonbase, and filled in the whole playing area with bits and pieces (which doesn't actually take very long), all the fun suddenly evaporates and you're left with a very basic trading game.

Moonbase is unfortunate in that it slips so neatly into the *Sim City* category of games, and therefore has such high standards set for it before it even begins. Not that it's in with bad company or anything, it just isn't anything new. I'd like to say 'it's out of this world', but that would be a slight overstatement (and a crap joke to finish on). • *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE

A fairly run-of-the-mill sim game with a fruity lunar streak. Hardly even 'one small step' for computer games (more like running on the spot), but it's maddeningly addictive all the same (at least in the short term).

69 PERCENT



Building your *Moonbase* certainly isn't going to be cheap. The prices tend to be (ahem) astronomical.

GHOST BATTLE

Publisher: Thalion
Price: £25.53
Authors: Erwin Kloibhofer, Henk Nieborg
Release: Out now

Ghosts'n'Goblins has been the inspiration for some terrible crimes in the world of computer software, and I'm afraid this is another one. Let's get right down to the brass tacks straight away, shall we? Good Points: nifty sound effects, a bit different from the usual bangs and zaps; pretty graphics; three difficulty levels; reasonably slick presentation. Bad Points: utterly execrable animation, featuring the worst jumping and ladder-climbing I've seen in a very long time; slow gameplay; baddies that seem to appear out of the ether, even from somewhere that you've just visited which was quite definitely a baddie-free zone; hundreds of unavoidable 'appearing-from-nowhere' traps (my pet hate in arcade games); quite spectacular lack of imagination in all areas of plot and game design; huge amounts of dull trekking around in what it later (much later) transpires was entirely the wrong direction(s), not that there was any way of guessing beforehand; enemies that need to be shot a dozen times before they die – even the cannon-fodder ones; teeth-grindingly infuriating smug message at game-over time; everything else.

Taking on the deadly fauna in *Ghost Battle*. Pretty graphics, pretty dire game.

Though superficially classy-looking, *Ghost Battle* is an utterly tedious game, and a real bind to play more than twice in any given 24-hour period. The game's cover blurb says it all, really – 'Thalion. Sometimes, it's frightening'. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

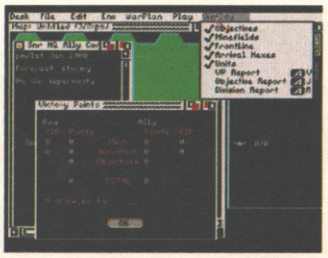
Boring, boring, boring, boring, boring. Everything that's wrong with full-price Amiga software in one handy package. (Except the sound). There isn't a person alive who couldn't find a better use for £25 than this.

38 PERCENT

HALLS OF MONTEZUMA

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Price: £25.99
Authors: Strategic Simulations Group
Release: Out now

As AMIGA POWER's newly-appointed Really Complicated Strategy Games That No-one Else Wants To Review Because They Take Ages To Work Out And Then Turn Out To Be Crap Editor, I was delighted to be presented with SSG's *Halls of Montezuma*. 'This is all I need' were the words furthest from my mind as I cast aside my finals revision, cancelled all appointments and settled down beside the fire with the 824 page manual.



The rather off-putting window and icon heavy display of *Halls Of Montezuma*.

At first glance it looks overwhelmingly similar to every other wargame (lots of flashing squares, movement phases etc), the only major anomaly being the eight different scenarios to choose between. They all involve the US Marines, following their history through action in Mexico, WW I, WW II, Korea and Vietnam, which some people will no doubt find interesting. Closer examination of the manual reveals, however, that what we've got here is really more of a wargame designer. The Marines scenarios are actually just sophisticated demos, and you can alter them at will or even design your own wargames from scratch. Nifty, eh? (Assuming you like this sort of thing, of course, which, let's face it, won't account for many people.)

At the heart of the package is the 'Battlefront' system, which encompasses just about everything a wargamer could hope for. Units can be ground-based, airborne and amphibious. There are the usual impenetrable lists of attributes for each one – more than I think I've ever seen before, in fact – which can all be set up from the editor. And you can even design your own maps with all sorts of colourful icons and things. It's yet another case of the only limit being your imagination. The Australian-based company which has come up with all this has apparently produced a range of scenarios which you can purchase (probably a good idea, as even a minor skirmish would probably take years to set up by yourself) and a magazine full of hints and tips too.

So, um, it's up to you, really. As wargames go this one's been professionally put together, and you can't fault it on value for money. But it is formidably complicated, as these things always are, and it would take a braver man than most to stick at it for very long. • *JONATHAN DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Quite possibly one of the best things to happen to wargaming since the invention of the flashing square, but a wargame nonetheless.

61 PERCENT

Tom Clancy's thriller comes in from the cold and onto the Amiga.

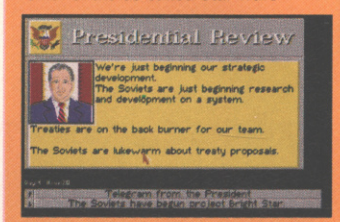
THE CARDINAL OF THE KREMLIN

Publisher: Accolade
Price: £24.99
Author: Capstone
Release: Out now

When a new game based on one of Tom Clancy's techno-thriller novels landed on my desk I expected to be thrown head first into a sea of three letter abbreviations, military jargon and worryingly plausible conspiracy theories. And – would you believe it? – I was right.

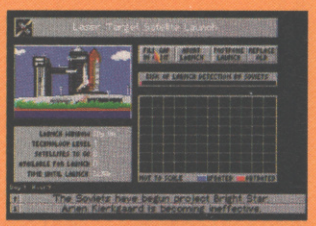
Not that any of that's a bad thing, however – it certainly helps build up the Cold War atmosphere a treat. Here is a game which – the assumed grovelling respect for all things military aside – successfully and excitingly allows us to (as Clancy puts it in the manual) 'participate in events beyond our daily life'. In particular, events surrounding the development of a working SDI system by the US military, with the help of the CIA, under the protection of the FBI, and in competition with the KGB. (With me so far?) Of course, this is all milk and honey to Clancy fans, who love nothing better than to gorge themselves on politics, corruption and the secrets of the powerful.

As head of the Central Intelligence Agency (there's no messing about in this game!) and chief of the so-called Star Wars project, you must control the development and defence of your own missile-destroying satellite laser system while undermining the Soviets' project. At your disposal are scientists, soldiers, spies and satellites which you must deploy around the world.



'Mr President, I'm afraid I've just initiated World War Three.' 'Good work, son. Carry on.'

It's up to the CIA to dicate policy on various matters – telling lies is actually positively encouraged in the game!



Launching the Star Wars kit. Note the reminders at the bottom of the screen.

Each area of your influence is represented by a button on screen (there are ten) which you use to hire, fire and generally delegate. For example, to start with you'll need to choose your most trustworthy programmer to head your computer department, checking how smart, and how reliable, the candidates are on a series of easy-to-read meters. It's all fairly simple click and select strategy stuff, and though there are plenty of tasks to undertake, it does have a tendancy to become rather tedious after a few hours – a bit like attempting all your ironing in one go.

Of course, it's not as simple as that. For a start, you'll have to watch out for employees burning out (or getting themselves kidnapped!) and take steps to prevent it or correct things once it's happened, while at the same time keeping in touch with your spies and events further afield. Your main concern is to get some of your own lasers into space before the Soviets can complete their development program – something you achieve by a) getting your stuff finished as fast as possible and b) doing your best to hamper the Soviet project by sending a commando operative against them.

Unfortunately, this potentially most exciting bit turns out to be something of a disaster – you're thrust from a reasonably captivating strategy game into a two dimensional seek out and destroy sequence of masterful banality, and it mucks things up a treat. It would not look amiss in an infant school programming class. (It's amazing how much the programmers think they can get away with...)

It's a shame, because as strategy games go *The Cardinal of the Kremlin* is busy and believable without being overly complex. The manual is simple and direct, and it takes no time at all to get playing. For the most part it is a graphically acceptable and smooth (if rather uninspiring) ride, but ultimately you're left with a feeling that the various tasks don't seem to connect awfully well.

Generally then, a weak attempt to transfer Clancy's slightly dubious (but undeniably readable) works to silicon. For fans the best bet must still be Grandslam's *The Hunt for Red October*, which succeeds where this game fails – in mixing good strategy with exciting action without hurting either. • *COLIN CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Believable and reasonably captivating strategy affair spoiled completely by an inane arcade sequence, positioned ludicrously at the centre of the game. Clancy fans, like the rest of us, should expect a good deal more.

51 PERCENT

CHALLENGE GOLF

Publisher: On-Line Entertainment
Authors: Jason Chown, Steey Scott
Price: £24.99
Release: Out now

Releasing a new Amiga golf game so soon after Electronic Arts' classic *PGA Tour Golf* might be seen by some people as rather unfortunate timing, but if the game's good enough, there's always room in the market for one more. The problem with *Challenge Golf* is that, in a nutshell, it simply isn't good enough. The graphics may be a bit on the crude side, with lots of right angles and sudden edges, and the sound is minimalist even by golf sim standards, but neither are terrible. It's the playability that's really lacking here, the 'feel' is simply wrong. The ball never really seems to get airborne half the time, it almost never goes anywhere remotely close to where you aim the cursor, and when you reach the green you're confronted by a putting sequence that's

Handicapped by a lack of gameplay - *Challenge Golf.*

nothing short of diabolical. For a start there's no indication of what distance the strength bar represents (a fault found all the way through the game), the supposed slope on the green bears only a slight resemblance to the one shown onscreen, and (most bizarrely of all) the hole itself appears to be made of rubber, judging by the way the ball has a habit of bouncing straight off it and coming back at you.

The instructions are of no help whatsoever when it comes to deciphering all of these quirks, and the end result is that you'll get very fed up of this game very quickly. And it doesn't help, of course, that there are plenty of really rather stunningly good golf games out there already. •

STUART CAMPBELL

THE BOTTOM LINE

Packed with options, but none of them can help *Challenge Golf* overcome a basic lack of playability. Nowhere near the level of *PGA Tour* (not even as good as *World Class Leaderboard*, in fact).

45 PERCENT

FRENETIC

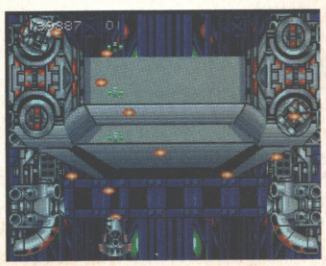
Publisher: Core Design
Authors: Rob Toone, Jason Gee
Price: £20.99
Release: Out now

Core seem to be suffering from a spot of creative block at the moment. After some top-notch product, first they release a straight *Ikari Warriors* clone (*Warzone*, 65% from us in issue 2), and now they've come up with this, a vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up taken directly from the *Xenon 2* textbook. The problem for me is trying to find something new to say about it, so here goes.

No, I'm sorry. It's gone. *Frenetic* is a shoot-'em-up that more or less completely fails to stand out from the crowd in any way. The levels (of which there are eight) all have that 'seen-it-before' look to them (for example, level one is from *Battle Squadron*, level two is from *Xenon 2*, and level three's from *Battle Squadron* again), and the gameplay doesn't do anything to dispel the feeling. The bolt-on power-ups are pure *Xenon 2* once more, and the most 'different' thing about the aliens is that you come across multiple-hit baddies rather earlier than you do in most games (hardly a good point in my book). Action-wise there's plenty going on, though, and the faster-than-usual scrolling backgrounds create an effective illusion of speed, although the game isn't actually any faster than the average. Oops, it's that 'A' word again.

Frenetic is a zappy enough little blaster, and very nicely put together, but if you compare it to something like *R-Type II* (also in this issue), it very quickly starts to look decidedly second-rate. You can see what they've been aiming at, but none of the promises made to us by the programmers when interviewed last issue really seem to have come off. Even at the 'reduced' £21 price point, you're not getting an awful lot for your money here, and I can't recommend it with any great sense of conviction at all. •

STUART CAMPBELL



Core's uninspiring kill-'em-all *Frenetic.*

THE BOTTOM LINE

I just couldn't get excited about playing this for the life of me. A bit of a waste of some slick programming.

59 PERCENT

Seen the matches? Now play the game.

MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE

Publisher: Krisalis
Price: £25.99
Authors: Shaun Hollingworth, Peter Harrap, Mark Incley
Release: Out now

Within five minutes of booting this up I had Lee Sharpe emerging from an untidy midfield melee, skipping through the left wing and crossing over for Mark Hughes to make a subtle touch before rocketing the ball into the goal.

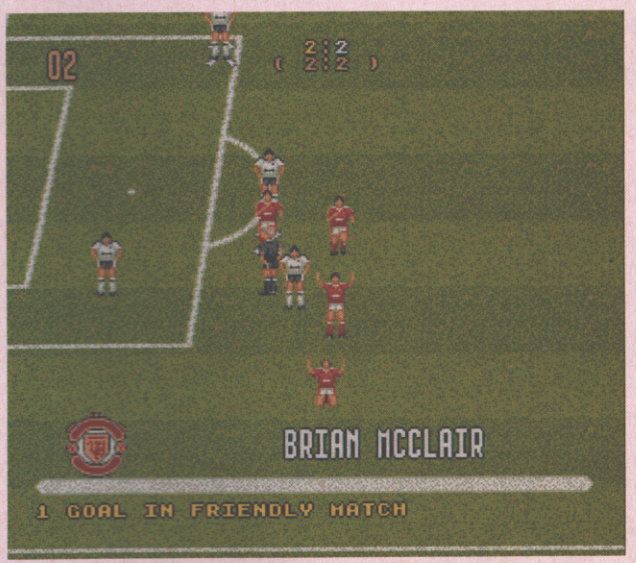
The little Sparky character rolled over towards the crowd and performed his victory salute before being mauled by tiny team mates. Any student of the ways of Old Trafford will happily admit that this is glorious realism.

I have to confess to a love of Manchester United football that verges on the obsessive so please forgive this review's ridiculous enthusiasm. But honestly, this really is a marvellous football game.

Man Utd Europe is viewed in the familiar sideways view three dimensional fashion with the computer choosing which player the joystick dictates to at any time. Unlike so many football games this is done exceptionally intuitively, so there's none of that frustrating hanging around while the program finally decides to nominate a character to chase some rampaging centre forward.

There are bagfuls of controls at your disposal but you won't need to wade through a manual to learn them. Tackling, shooting, dribbling and so on come naturally and sweetly. Too many games are obsessed with making you work to attain skills which would be elementary to any half-decent footballer – *Manchester Utd* lets you get on with trying to win games straight away.

Having said that though, we're not talking about a simple stroll towards the European Cup Final in your first campaign – *Manchester United Europe* provides a learning curve which is sensible while challenging, and winning games is no breeze. Still, at least when you're beaten there's nobody at fault but yourself – you can't blame the game's controls, which makes for such a refreshing change (I've broken more joysticks than I care to count after grappling with certain soccer simulations).



Hurrah! United are in the lead, thanks to one in the corner of the net from McClair.

It won't appeal to everyone though. Strict football strategists should keep away because this is first and foremost an action game. Strategy is (thankfully) limited to picking the team and sorting out formations, and even that is optional.

What else can I say? Well, the game's fast, but not stupidly so, the sound is good, it sticks to the rules of the real game but – hey! – enough already. If soccer is your thing, just go out and buy this, okay? (Even if you hate Man United). •

COLIN CAMPBELL

'I didn't touch him, ref.'

Mid pitch action.

A nightmare moment.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Great, wonderful, superb (though not without imperfections). Beats the hell out of all those terrible football games you've tried before.

81 PERCENT

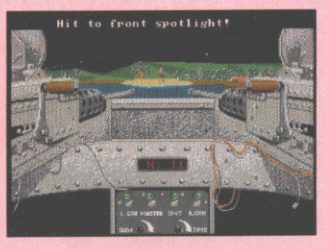
Accolade get 'Nam flashbacks in this highly unusual simulation.

GUNBOAT

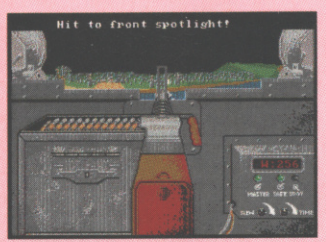
Publisher: Accolade
Price: £29.99
Authors: Tom Laughry, Roseann Mitchell (graphics)
Release: Out now

From the outset, *Gunboat* has more in common with *F-19 Stealth Fighter* or *M1 Tank Platoon* than it has with, say, *Operation Wolf*. It's a simulation of the uses to which American River Patrol Boats (PBRs) have been or could be used. Hence, in the scenario selection you can run on missions in Vietnam, Colombia and the Panama Canal. The scenarios form a loose plot. Your first missions are in Vietnam because 'that's where it all began'. As you're promoted for successfully completing missions, you can move into the Colombian operation zone. The very best will be put on assignment along the Panama Canal. Designer Tom Loughry claims there's an earthquake-driven rockfall in one scenario which he put in there because he was working on the game through the aftershocks of a fat 7.1.

But you don't have to go on a mission immediately. You can practise on either the bow or stern gun positions or try your hand at the helm. There are are a number of settings to take care of which fall into the category of pregame miscellany. These include setting the detail level to high or low (standard flight sim territory) and the slew rate for steering or firing weapons and choosing the firepower itself (.50 calibre Brownings and M129 grenade launchers being standard). PBRs recently sent to Panama mount the GE M134 Minigun and these too are available from the arsenal.



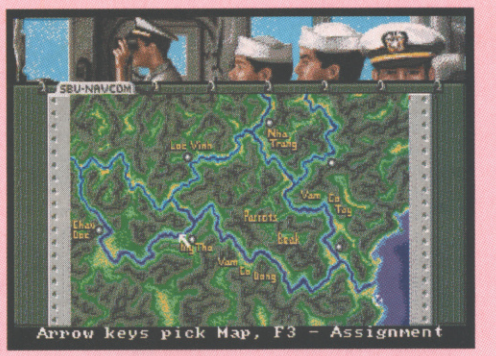
That front spotlight takes another beating. (Better take out that guy on the shore pretty damned quickly!)



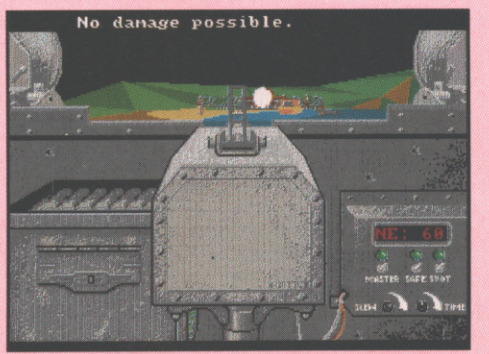
Gunboat's combination of 3D polygon graphics with blocky detail added over the top – it's a strange but effective mix.

Once you're at station you kick power into the weapon system (or the boat itself) and begin your cruise down one more Viet-sim creek. A gunner can send instructions to the pilot and vice versa. You can abdicate responsibility for the vessel as a whole while you're familiarising yourself with any one particular piece of equipment but you'll soon feel confident enough to control every aspect of a mission. (Anyway, it makes sense to tell the pilot to rotate the water jets left to avoid an incoming missile).

One thing you have to cope with right from the start however, is night combat. To this end both gun positions are fitted with powerful searchlights, the trade off being that they give away your PBR's position. Land your cone of light on the enemy and you've as good as got them in your sights. Another habit you should get into is that of asking for target ID in order to avoid problems with 'friendly fire', though frankly there didn't seem much call for it on the early missions. Perhaps it's something which complicates more confined and difficult combat situations later on.



Selecting your next assignment on the map screen (ie deciding exactly where it is you're going to get blown to bits).



Using the spotlight may make things easier to shoot when it's dark, but it equally gives the enemy something to aim for.

My first mission, I confess, felt like something of a turkey shoot. I'd had a few hours at the various stations and the only thing I wasn't familiar with was the program's time compression routine. I was soon hot tailing it (well, trying to pull a 30mph turn in a river boat) away from a jetty choc-a-bloc with the reunion party of an NVA armour unit. I actually got out of there with boat and crew intact but wasn't in a position to do anything constructive afterwards. You can meet the opposition in almost any manner of its choosing. There are riverside concrete bunkers, Hind helicopters, infantry, sampans, PT-76s – you name it. *Gunboat* has as much going for it in terms of detail as many a tank or flight sim, but it's not without its problems. The graphics are a busy mix of filled polygons and what look like expanded sprites but semi-animated is the best word for the sprites, which sometimes look too large. What really takes a bite out of the playability is the response speed which is too slow to be useful on many occasions. Much of the sluggishness is deliberate and probably conveys some of the difficulty of overcoming the inertia of the PBR. Still, enjoyable and atmospheric fun • *SEAN MASTERSON*

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you're into simulations, *Gunboat* delivers the goods with originality and style. If you haven't tried sims yet, however, you'd be better off with a flight game – it'll have far more in the way of immediate appeal. One meg only too, which spoils it for a lot of you.

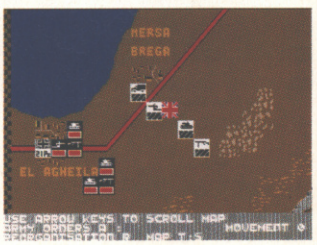
71 PERCENT

AFRIKA KORPS

Publisher: Impressions
Authors: Ken Wright/Andrew Prime
Price: £29.99
Release: Out now

With severe risk of sounding suspiciously like every other person who has ever ventured to review a war game, I suppose I'd better get on with it. *Afrika Korps* is, as I just mentioned, a war game, simulating the campaign fought in the western desert during World War II between Erwin Rommel's Afrika Korps (the baddies), and Montgomery's Eighth Army (the goodies). Traditionally, you choose which side to play, and then feverishly attempt to beat the other (taken by the computer), the game ending when one side is over-powered, or either side reaches a specific destination.

That's the scenario set (always the first thing to do when reviewing a war game), so now onto the waffly opinion part. *Afrika Korps* is in fact the sequel to the inexplicably popular *Blitzkrieg May 1940* – coded by the same author, but with suitable improvements made over the original. Indeed, the instruction booklet claims that it has taken years of development and testing to result in a program with such a highly sophisticated artificial intelligence system. However, this isn't immediately obvious from the cute



Zooming in on the action we can see a conflict is in the offing.

little squares, cuddly scrollable brown map and lovable menus which greet you on loading. As we all know, you can't review a-16 bit wargame without mentioning the Spectrum, and then contemplating whether the game in hand wouldn't seem more at home loaded into Mr Rubber Keys himself, so here goes – there's actually nothing to initially distinguish this from, oh, I don't know, a Spectrum game.

Once you've got past the initial impressions and get to do a bit of careful analysis of the instructions things get even more depressing – there seems to be nothing new on offer here in gameplay terms either. Yet again, little has been done to exploit the potential of the Amiga (another customary wargame review phrase, there).

Of course, long term wargame extremists beyond help will be up in arms about my rather cynical view, shouting things such as 'They're not all the same', 'Who cares about the graphics?', 'Well, I like them', 'Etc'. And if this highly sophisticated artificial intelligence system is the one redeeming factor which actually

sets *Korps* aside from its counterparts, then they'll no doubt be shouting about that too.

And unfortunately, there's no one who can stop them. All but the most fanatical strategy nut should keep away from this unimpressive desert romp • *RICH PELLEY*

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's a war game, and it's on the Amiga. A slightly dubious combination, really. Dull. Another one meg only game.

40 PERCENT

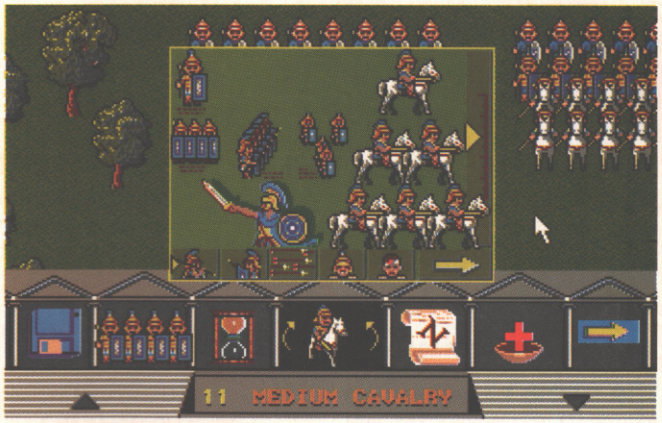
COHORT

Publisher: Impressions
Price: £29.99
Author: Edward Grabowski
Release date: Out now

Anyone into battle sims will probably remember *Rorke's Drift. Cohort* uses an improved version of the same gaming system, but takes a step back in time to the days of Imperial Rome. Here two opposing armies face each other across one of four Fields Of Honour. There are seven unit types for you to muck around with – light, medium and heavy infantry, light, medium and heavy cavalry and archers – and you can choose to either use a preset selection or compose your own army of up to 16 units.

What sets *Cohort* (and *Rorke's Drift*) apart from the majority of wargames is the way that the game's been designed. *Cohort*'s characters are cute, fully animated people who walk, run, charge and fight at your command. The combat arena is many times bigger than the screen and you can either scroll around under mouse control or jump to a specific location using the full-screen map.

While it was an interesting way of doing things, *Rourke's Drift* had some rough edges – it's nice to see that things have been improved upon here. The icon control system is much better for a start – things are clearer, and you can now move units as a single group and group them in formations. However, it's still too complicated for it's own good – actions such as attempting to regroup a unit in battle often have hilarious rather than strategic effect, as the legionnaires jostle with each other to get past. And although the manual talks about the different tactics that the Roman legions used against



The (relatively) outstanding graphics of *Cohort*. The way ahead for wargames?

enemies such as barbarian, Macedonian and Carthaginian armies, you never get to see them – your computer opponents are always just another bunch of Romans.

Although the game has its flaws, *Cohort* has a lot of immediate appeal. I was locked into it for a couple of days before its attraction started to fade. The control system is still not all its cracked up to be and silly anomalies (such as the cavalry sound effects still working when there are no horses on the field) take their toll.• *PAUL LYONS*

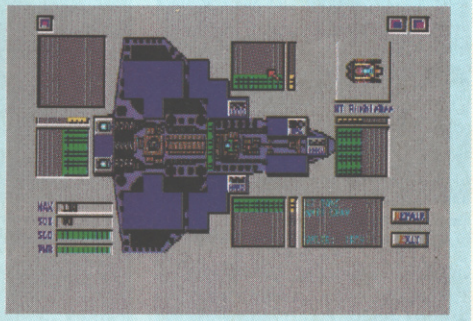
THE BOTTOM LINE

A fine off-beat battle sim, more accessable than most. Not worth £29.99 though. One meg only too.

62 PERCENT

From the makers of the great *Eye Of The Beholder* comes this. Oh dear, it's useless...

RENEGADE LEGION INTERCEPTOR



Getting techie with a space fighter in *RLI*.

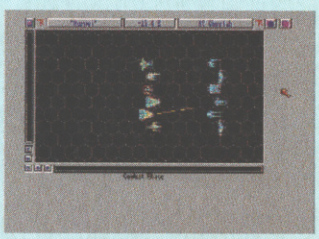
Publisher: SSI (US Gold)
Authors: Scott Bayless, Graeme Bayless, Todd Mitchell
Price: £24.99
Availability: Out now

For fans of space based military hardware of the 63rd Century this is a little gem. No detail of (made up, of course) weapons or ships is deemed too trivial for this cuddle with a muddle of intergalactic squadrons, weird aliens and pompous planetary alliances – it's ideal stuff for sci-fi train spotters and the sort of people who buy those manuals of blueprints to the Starship Enterprise.

For the rest of us, however, this is a bit of a dog. The main problem is a severe lack of action. What happens is this: you are presented with an 'empty' squadron of space fighters and given a mission. Your the first task is obviously to 'fill them up' by chosing pilots, picking ships (from a list of 30!) and loading them up with weapons. (It is possible to design your own ships, but it soon becomes clear that this is a waste of time). Once all the fiddle faddling around with hardware and pilots is over, the game proper begins, much of which involves getting yourself embroiled in some epic space battle or other.

So how does this bit work then?

Selecting weapons systems can be (ahem) really, really interesting (zzzzz).



Old-fashioned isn't always best, a point highlighted by these dull combat screens.

Well, battle commences on a grid divided into loads of hexagonal shapes. Your guys are facing the other guys, and the first thing to do is move your ships into a good battle order to get into good firing positions. It's best described as the pencil and paper game Battleships on the move, and yes, it really is that simple. Just pick an enemy, aim, and fire. He'll be doing the same to you of course, but hopefully not as well.

The trouble with this is that no amount careful picking among the vast selection of sophisticated kit is going to make any real difference at all – most of the time you're going to win anyway. The action sequences are ugly and easy, the bag guys are amazingly stupid, and it's all over very quickly.

If you manage to retain your interest, things develop a bit as the game goes on. Pilots gain experience, building up credits which allow you to buy bigger, better ships, and fit nastier weapons. All very well, but it's a bit vacant and pointless really when the dodgy kit you started off with is perfectly capable of doing exactly the same job within minutes?

So what should we make of it? Well, the programmers have clearly had a whale of a time designing battle cruisers, inventing alien races, and dreaming up heavy duty sc-fi scenarios, but in all their excitement they forgot to do very much with the actual game. If you're the sort of person who enjoys leafing through technical manuals of starships that won't exist for another millennium or two, then this is, just possibly, what you've been looking for. Otherwise, it's a terrible waste of time. It's hard to believe that this is the same publisher that came up with *Eye of the Beholder.* • *COLIN CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Lots of impressive sci-fi hardware, but precious little opportunity to use any of it. One for the sci-fi nuts, rather than those after a game. One meg only.

39 PERCENT

BUDGET

And here we go, straight into the budgies. It's the normal selection of re-releases and original games – GBH, by the way, is the name of Gremlin's new cheapie label.

BARBARIAN

Publisher: Kixx
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

It's good news for fans of one-on-one beat-'em-ups this month, with Kixx releasing both *Street Fighter* and this controversial game from 1988. It was controversial because a) it had a mildly

Single screen swordfighting in the distinctly 8-bit looking *Barbarian*.

suggestive picture of the infamous Maria Whittaker on the box (strangely missing from this version) and b) because it was thought by some people to be excessively violent (the central scene involves a decapitation sequence, with blood spurting from the neck of the defeated warrior). It all seems like a bit of a storm in a tea cup these days, perhaps because the C64-like blobby graphics couldn't possibly upset anyone anymore, or perhaps because it's such an average game that it just isn't worth getting worked up about. As these kind of things go, it's quite good fun, and certainly a lot better than *Street Fighter* (reviewed over on the right there), with good sound, some nice humourous touches and a fair degree of challenge.

Any game in this field, though, is always going to be compared to the mighty *IK+*, and in that light *Barbarian* looks distinctly second-rate. •
STUART CAMPBELL

THE BOTTOM LINE
About as much fun as these things get. Great in 2-player mode, but only worth buying if you've already got *IK+* and want something a bit different.
60 PERCENT

BIONIC COMMANDO

Publisher: Kixx
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

In its day (1988 or thereabouts) this was feted as one of the better examples of

Still pics of *Bionic Commando* can't really convey the scrolling effect (thankfully).

the coin-op converter's art. It sounds quite exciting, but all that really proves is how little people were prepared to settle for in those early days (particularly when a game carried the tag of coin-op conversion), because this is absolutely dire.

The arcade original was novel and great fun, with the telescopic arm adding a new dimension to the platform genre, but in this conversion the all-important smooth scrolling has been replaced by a God-awful push scroll system which completely (and I really do mean completely) destroys the playability.

It's a shame, because the graphics are very faithful and the sound is fab, but the game is quite unbearable to actually play, and even £7.99 is too much to spend on some pretty pictures (pretty by 1988 standards, anyway) and groovy tunes. You'll give yourself a headache if you buy *Bionic Commando*, so, um, unless you want a headache, don't bother. •
STUART CAMPBELL

THE BOTTOM LINE
Terminally flawed conversion that isn't worth considering unless you're a real masochist. More of a *Chronic Commando* than a *Bionic Commando*.
30 PERCENT

FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR 2

Publisher: GBH
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Another average football game rises from the grave at a budget price.

This game provides a different slant on an old favourite, the football management sim. Instead of being the manager, you take the player's perspective, trying to make a name for yourself as the country's top goal-scorer by means of a strange combination of arcade sequences, tactical planning, and gambling money on your ability to answer football trivia questions (?). It's an interesting concept, and initially makes for a pretty engrossing game, but repetitiveness soon rears its ugly head, and you notice that it's possible to simply keep gambling on trivia (the same questions – many of which are out of date now – repeat fairly frequently) until you've got enough dosh to buy a measure of success. There are also a couple of annoying illogicalities (at one point you're told that to win an international cap you must score twice in that week's match – but you don't have a match that week), but this is still reasonable entertainment. You can do much better for the money, though. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Different and reasonably good fun, but don't expect to come back to it much after the first few goes.
57 PERCENT

LED STORM

Publisher: Kixx
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

This is yet another Kixx re-release of an obscure (ie I've never seen it) CapCom coin-op (see also *Bionic Commando* and *Street Fighter* reviews), and, if I can get straight to the point, it's another duffer. *LED Storm* is a vertically-scrolling race game, not unlike the classic (ie incredibly old) arcade machine *Burnin' Rubber* in several ways. Except it isn't.

What it is is actually a memory-test game, as the screen moves too fast for you to react to anything that comes at you, so your only chance of success is to crash a lot and remember where it happened for the next time you happen to be whizzing past that point in the game. It also suffers

And you wondered why *LED Storm* wasn't a hit in the arcades? Now you know.

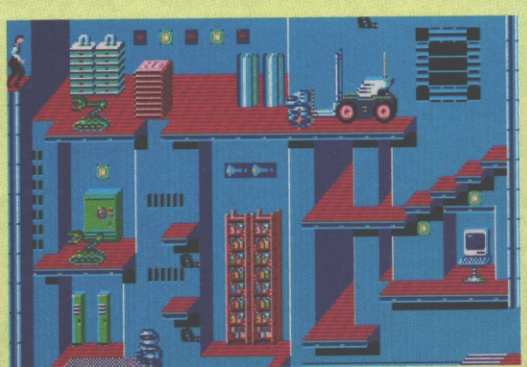
from some very juddery horizontal scrolling and pretty useless music, and as a whole it's simply uninspiring.

You'll get a couple of hours entertainment out of it if you're lucky (and undemanding), but you should really be looking to set your standards rather higher. Not good, not exactly crap, not anything very much. •
STUART CAMPBELL

THE BOTTOM LINE
Spectacularly average driving-game-that-isn't with very little in the way of playability to recommend it. Eight quid is still too much.
43 PERCENT

An early platform classic gets a new lease of

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION II



Platforms, puzzles, and acrobatics make *Impossible Mission II* a real classic.

SHARKEY'S MOLL

Publisher: Zeppelin
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

The *Op Wolf* style main screen of *Sharkey's Moll* – complete with bad grammar.

There seems to be something of a glut of *Operation Wolf*-type shooting games on the market at the moment. Recently we've seen *Predator 2*, *Beast Busters*, *Operation Wolf* itself on budget re-release, and now this cheapie from Zeppelin set in Prohibition Chicago in the 1920s. All this means is that the usual aliens/ zombies/ soldiers are replaced with sharp-suited mobsters and the grenades become rather weedy Molotov cocktails (or 'Molotov's' as the screen rather annoyingly insists on calling them). Otherwise it's the same old kill-everything gameplay, and it's done perfectly competently without any glaring flaws or outstanding flair. It's tough enough to be challenging without ever really stretching you. There's a nice touch at the end of a level (I won't spoil it for you), but basically we're in textbook territory here. *Op Wolf* games are usually pretty short on lasting appeal, so if you really want a new one, at least this one will only set you back eight quid. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
As good gameplay-wise as most games of the type, and the unremarkable aesthetics are only to be expected at the price. Perfectly respectable if *Op Wolf* is your thing.
60 PERCENT

SUPER CARS

Publisher: GBH
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Continuing what seems to be shaping into a trend in the software biz at the mo, Gremlin have followed up the release of this game's sequel, *Super Cars II* (surprisingly enough), with a budget re-run of the original, perhaps for fans of the later games whose appetites have been whetted (or maybe just to make some more dosh without writing any new games). Whatever, this is a great game, considerably more playable in my opinion than its much-feted offspring. Your car handles better, the courses test your driving skill more than your powers of memory or your weapon capability, the tracks are short enough to avoid

Arguably the best *Super Sprint*-style racer, and now a bargain at £7.99.

repetitiveness and boredom (a problem with *SCII*), and there're also fewer cars crowding the wider roads, so you get a chance to build up a bit of speed now and again (*SCII* was a very stop-start affair). In its own right though, *Super Cars* is an excellent overhead-view racer in the *Super Sprint* mould, and even if you own the sequel, I'd strongly recommend you splash out on this. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
The music is pretty appalling, but – hey! – nothing's perfect. A superior game to its big brother, at a third of the price. A serious bargain.
79 PERCENT

STREET FIGHTER

Publisher: Kixx
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Martial arts, minus the art, in the appalling-beyond-belief *Street Fighter*.

This conversion of the CapCom coin-op was one of US Gold's flagship releases back in 1989. The huge graphics of the arcade game concealed some pretty basic gameplay, but it was still reasonable fun. Sadly, that's not something you can say about this version – it's utterly dreadful. The graphics come across pretty well, but the actual animation is disgraceful, it's incredibly slow to play and unresponsive to control, and the level of challenge is simply non-existent.

On my very first go I won 19 of the game's 20 bouts, and on forcing myself (well, several large men with crowbars had to force me actually, but that's a technical point) to play it again, I completed the whole thing. When you consider that *IK+* is also available at the same budget price, you'd need to be particularly stupid to even think about getting this game. Don't be fooled by the pretty screen, this is pitiful trash of the very highest (or should that be lowest?) order. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Even if you love beat-'em-ups, you'll hate *Street Fighter*. How USG can have the brass neck to release it twice is totally beyond me.
9 PERCENT

IMPOSSAMOLE

Publisher: GBH
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Before going out on their own, Core Design made something of a name for themselves programming a number of games in an immediately identifiable platform style – games like *Switchblade*, *Rick Dangerous*, er, *Rick Dangerous II*, and this. At first glance they can all be mistaken for one another, but *Impossamole* stands out from the crowd thanks to the fact that it's crap.

It's a classic mistake, but the game seems almost determined to fall uncomfortably between the twin stools of being a platform game and – of all things – a beat-'em-up. The baddies all require several good whacks from Monty Mole (the

Less ridiculous at £7.99 than it was at full wack, but *Impossamole* is still a bad buy.

hero of the game) before they can be persuaded to clear off, and this makes the levels a real chore to progress through. My pet hate, the invisible danger syndrome makes a few unwelcome appearances too, and generally you'll see that a complete lack of imagination has been employed at almost every point. *Impossamole* is slow and tedious and a bad buy at any price. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

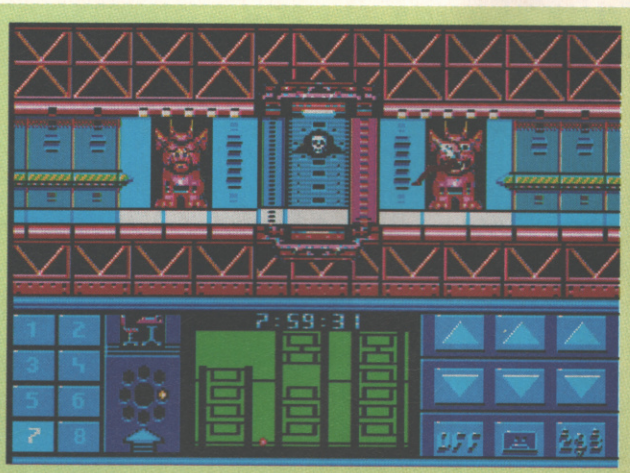
THE BOTTOM LINE
If you're a Monty fan, don't buy this game – it'll ruin your happy memories. If you've never heard of Monty, avoid it in its own right.
30 PERCENT

life, courtesy of a timely budget re-release.

Publisher: Kixx
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

The original *Impossible Mission* on the C64 is one of the legends of computer gaming, and though it was never converted to 16-bit, this sequel made very few changes to the winning formula. For the uninitiated, it's a challenging platform game with some fairly minor puzzle elements thrown in mixed with a novel (well, it was novel in its time) lives system which gives you no set number of lives, but a tightish time limit which decreases steadily (except when you get killed, whereupon you lose a big chunk at once). That's about it for rules, really – it's the immediate playability of *Impossible Mission II* which makes it so great. It's also got atmosphere in abundance, and a game task that's tough not by sheer size (as is, rather sadly, the case with many games these days), but by dint of the care that's been taken in welding together a relatively small number of elements to produce tricky and brain-teasing situations on every screen. This is by far the best of the recent clutch of Kixx games, and will give you hours of fun for your eight quid. Invest in a bit of gaming history. •
STUART CAMPBELL

THE BOTTOM LINE
A corking little game with an epic feel that belies its size. Forget all the flash licences – if you're going to buy a re-release this month, get this one.
80 PERCENT

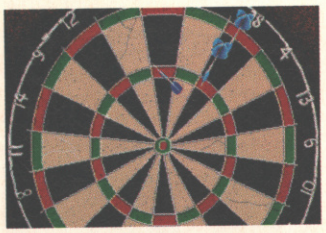


It's quicker by lift in Kixx's classic *Impossible Mission II*. The map at the bottom of the screen is built up as our hero makes his way through the enemy complex.

JOHN LOWE'S ULTIMATE DARTS

Publisher: Kixx
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

This is Another Computer Darts Game, distinguished by the fact that it's packed with options allowing you to play against 16 of the world's top players, play alternative games including 'darts soccer' and 'darts cricket', play against a chum using a real board and have the computer keep score (?), compete in various



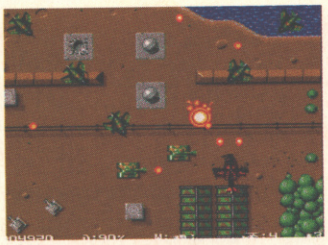
Never has such a daft idea for a computer game been done so many times.

tournaments or exhibition matches, as well as all the usual computer darts stuff . Control is by the traditional 'wobbly hand' method, and is no more or less useful/accurate/irritating than in other games of the genre. The football and cricket games add a degree of lasting appeal, but there's nothing here to seize the imagination. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's computer darts time again. *John Lowe's Darts* is probably better than last month's Codies effort, but still hardly stunning. Buy it if you must.

55 PERCENT



Far from being a Depeche Mode licence, *Violator* is actually a top-notch blast.

VIOLATOR

Publisher: Code Masters
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

If the Codies spent as much time on the instructions of their games as they do writing the ridiculous crap that they put on the back of them, the world would be a happier place. Luckily, *Violator* isn't a game that needs a lot of explaining, being another *Flying Shark/SWIV/Sidewinder* clone, similar to the Codies' own recent *Kamikaze* but considerably better. *Violator* features polished graphics and scrolling, comparing favourably with full-price games in this field. The gameplay is good too, the only drawback being the high number of hits your helicopter can absorb, compared with the instant destruction resulting from collision with enemy vehicles. Overall though, this is a very impressive product which will keep vertical zap fans occupied for many an hour. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

The crap sound is the only disappointing element of this really rather fab little game. (I'm not convinced about the slightly 'oo-er' title though).

76 PERCENT

RUN THE GAUNTLET

Publisher: The Hit Squad
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

'Hi, I'm Martin Shaw. This is *Run The Gauntlet*. If you wanna see action sports (chortle chortle), this is the place to be.' Doesn't sound all that funny to me, but the sampled Martin clearly finds it entertaining, so fair enough. By a strange coincidence, 'entertaining' is exactly what this game isn't. It's a sort of sports sim with *Super*

'Hi, I'm Martin Shaw, If you wanna see a really crap game, this is the place to be.'

Sprint overtones, licensed from the TV show. It's heavy on sampled sound and digitised graphics, and you'll have as much fun playing it as an asthma sufferer with a didgeridoo. The game is terminally unplayable, it's got absurd controls, and is chronically repetitive. And that's more than you need to know about this terrible, terrible game. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

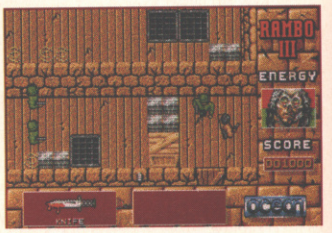
All style, no content. A completely intolerable lump of, to coin a phrase, crap, and if you were thinking about buying it, get a lobotomy. Now.

15 PERCENT

RAMBO III

Publisher: The Hit Squad
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

The title screen of this game credits the programming to 'Elmer Fudd'. If I'd had anything to do with it, I wouldn't want my real name made public either. This is a 1989 movie licence of the old school – ie it's a quick cash-in job where the programmers took a couple of popular game elements and bunged them together, adding a central sprite that looked a bit like the character from the film. They doubtless sold millions. The fact that all the people who bought it went back to the shop the next day and said 'Give me my money back, this is disgracefully slow and tedious crap with some of the dullest gameplay I've ever come across and music that I wouldn't feed to my cat' is neither here nor there. I'm not going to tell you any more – I don't want to get you interested in this garbage. Enough. • *STUART CAMPBELL*



***Rambo III* – the only film licence which looks like it was written by the lead actor.**

THE BOTTOM LINE

The graphical bit where Rambo loses energy to gradually become a skull is quite funny, but it's not worth eight quid.

14 PERCENT

System 3 in 'jolly good compilation with only one duff game' shock, horror revelation!

PREMIER COLLECTION

Publisher: System 3
Price: £24.99
Release: Out now

The first thing to note about this compilation is that it contains not *The Last Ninja*, as the box states (which never came out on 16-bit anyway), but *Ninja Remix*, the later, updated and improved version. Having got that out of the way, let's take a look, in time-honoured fashion, at each of the games in the pack individually.

Starting at the top, *IK+* has already been well covered in AMIGA POWER. No.60 in the All-Time Top 100, 85 percent as a budget re-release, there can't be anything left to say about this utterly wonderful beat-'em-up, except that previously we may not have mentioned quite how fab the music is. So, to put that right, *IK+* has completely brilliant music to go with all its other completely brilliant features, and if you don't own it by now there must be something wrong with you, pal. (And by the way, did you spill my pint?)

The very yellow *Tusker*.

Next best is *Flimbo's Quest*, which is a cute platform arcade thing with gorgeous graphics and colour, but which is prone to become a little repetitive after a couple of hours play. Even so, it's the kind of thing that would be a real snip at budget price, so as part of a compilation it certainly doesn't let the side down any. A lovable game for those idle days when you can't be bothered to think too much.

Thirdly, the aforementioned *Ninja Remix*. We've got something of a love/hate relationship with this (as with the other games in the series) – some people love them for the undeniably lovely graphics and mammoth game task (which ensures lots of lastability), other people hate them for the horrible control system which makes the arcade fighting sequences a real pain in the neck, and causes frustration levels to reach unheard-of levels when trying to pull off a particularly tricky jump that needs pixel-perfect precision. Personally I tend more towards the latter camp, but if you're prepared to invest some time in learning the moves, this one will keep you off the streets for quite a while.

The classic *IK+*.

The 12" *Ninja Remix*.

The cute *Flimbo's Quest*.

The pack's closest thing to a real duffer is the ageing arcade adventure *Tusker*, which has nothing actually wrong with it, but nothing very much right with it either. A bit dull, but again there's lots to keep you busy and the graphics are good.

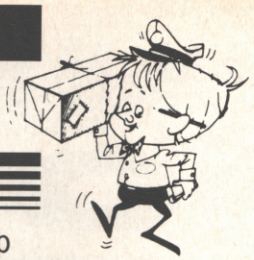
System 3 have put this out at the respectable price of £24.99, and at £6 a throw none of these games are a bad deal. There's a fair mix of styles, and the four games will entertain you for at least as long as an above average full-pricer, so if you're not too desperate for high-octane thrills (if you are, buy *IK+* on its own) you could do a lot worse. • *STUART CAMPBELL*

THE BOTTOM LINE

A bit of a bargain at the price, and diverse enough to keep you going for ages. If you don't already have any of the games in this pack, then snap it up.

80 PERCENT

BYTEBACK



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The AMIGA POWER Public Domain section gets an extra boost this month – up to two full pages in fact – simply so we can cover more games. 'But why?' you may be asking. Well, it's simply this – PD may be free, you see, but it most certainly ain't crap, as your host Stuart Campbell explains.

PD

RATINGS: ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

We've had a few letters this month from people who're still not sure exactly what Public Domain software is, so here's a quick recap on all it's various forms.

True Public Domain (also known as *Freeware*) is software which is released without copyright restrictions, which means you're free to do what you want with it, any old time. You can copy it, give it to your friends, stick it on the front of your magazine – anything at all as long as you don't change it or charge money for it. Most people get theirs from PD libraries, who don't charge for the software but do take a nominal fee for the cost of the actual disk, postage and packaging etc – usually between one and three pounds.

Shareware, on the other hand, is software which is released in a very similar manner, but if you do keep and use the software, you're asked to send the author a small donation towards the cost of producing more games. Usually, as an incentive to 'register' in this way, the author will then send you full documentation, updates of the programs, and so on and so forth. Obviously it's easy to just keep the disks and not send any money, but this is extremely poor form, and threatens the whole concept of *Shareware* – if nobody pays, authors will simply stop writing the stuff. If you do partake of any *Shareware*, do the decent thing.

Then there's *Exclusiveware*, which is simply PD which is only available from one PD library, usually as the result of a deal which involves the PD company paying the author a small royalty for every copy sold. This sometimes makes it slightly more expensive than normal PD, but not to any significant extent.

Licenceware (a fairly new idea) is an extension of Exclusiveware, and isn't really PD in the true sense at all. It's software which is released by PD companies, but the author retains the copyright, which means it's illegal to copy it. The price is usually higher than ordinary PD (but still much cheaper than most budget software), and the profits are split between the author and the PD firm.

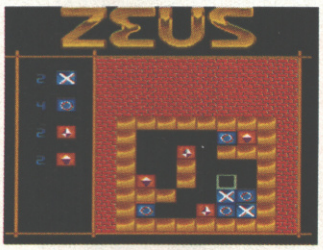
The addresses on these pages aren't the only places you can get the games reviewed here from – most are available from most libraries at various prices and on variously-compiled disks. The named companies are simply the nice people who sent us our own copies. Any PD companies out there who'd like a little plug, send us some stuff (games only, no demos thanks) to have a look at and we'll see what we can do.

That's it for now, other than to say that if you've discovered some particularly good (or, indeed, particularly bad) PD game that you think the world should know about, drop us a line (or even a copy of the game, if you can manage it) and we'll check it out (and credit you in the mag, of course). So with that, on with this month's fabby freebies.

ZEUS

(SEVENTEEN BIT, No. 1058)

Ulp. If you want to snap up this particular PD classic, I'd suggest you do it quickly, because when Ocean see what a blatant copy of their classic Taito coin-op conversion *Puzznic* it is, it may well disappear from the market in a blaze of writs before you can say 'official'. This is a very classy job indeed, being identical in every way to the original, except that there isn't a time limit and the screen layouts are different. Oh, and it uses mouse control,



***Zeus* – Looks familiar?**

which is a bit crap, but since there's no time limit it's not actually much of a problem. *Puzznic* itself was a highly respectable No. 34 on our All-Time Top 100, so for 89p this excellent copy represents an absolutely stunning buy. It might not last long, though, so don't waste any time.

VERDICT: Unmissable version that actually improves on the original in some ways. (The lack of time limits make it more of a puzzler than an arcade game). Get it while you can. ★★★★★

BLUE HOUSE

(NEW WAVE)

This is a bit of a strange fish, being a cross between *Thrust* and, er, a jukebox. What happens is you fly around in the normal manner, through smoothly-scrolling and tricky landscapes, and attempt to land on various stations and platforms scattered throughout the caverns. When you do, there's a short pause and the game loads up a new piece of demo music, while displaying the title and credits of it at the bottom of the screen until you land

***Thrust* gameplay with a chillin' soundtrack, that's the off-the-wall concept behind strangely named Blue House.**

somewhere else. It's a really novel way of presenting demo tunes, and the game's challenging and playable at the same time. Some of the music is lovely (and some of it's by Marillion, but you can't have everything), and you'll keep playing for ages to hear more new tunes.

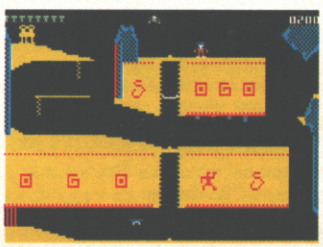
VERDICT: Different and refreshing, and a really nice piece of PD that wouldn't work any other way. Very good indeed. ★★★★

PHARAOH'S CURSE

(SEVENTEEN BIT, disk Games Galore 5)

This is a conversion of the old VIC-20 platform adventure by the same team who brought you last month's wonderful cover disk game *Frantic Freddie*. (STOP PRESS – *Pharaoh's Curse* can now be found on the cover disk of this very issue!) It's well worth getting for this alone, but when the disk also includes a sweet little *PacMan* game (STOP PRESS AGAIN! – this is on this issue's cover disk as well!), a good version of *Pengo*, a *Monopoly* clone, a couple of nice puzzlers and more besides (!), then the asking price of just 89p begins to look just a little bit on the ridiculous side of generous. Unless you're completely ga-ga, this is another disk that you really must have, and it's still good value even when you've already got two of the best games from us.

VERDICT: Excellent, excellent, and once more excellent. Hours of fun for all the family. ★★★★



***Pharaoh's Curse* – the VIC classic is back.**

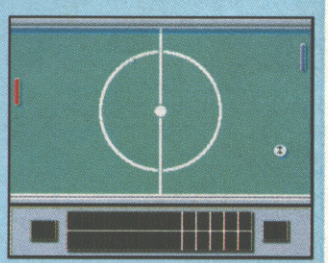
BATTLE PONG

(SEVENTEEN BIT, No 1056)

They cannot be serious... It's 1991 and someone's given the *Arkanoid* treatment to *Pong*, the original arcade bat-and-ball game. This updated version includes all the features you remember and love (the bats, the, er, ball, um...) but with NEW, IMPROVED, EXCITING extras like a pretty(ish) backdrop and (Lord have mercy on their souls) power-ups.

These are mostly pretty obvious, including bat reducers, bat expanders, freeze capsules, and the creation of a moving obstacle on the centre line. In fact, gameplay isn't dissimilar to an overhead-view version of the classic French oldie, *Shufflepuck Café*, except a bit more limited by the format. The main drawback with *Battle Pong* is that the computer opponent is almost unbeatable, but with adjustable speed levels and a two-player option you should still be able to wring considerably more than 89p's worth of entertainment out of this.

VERDICT: An extremely silly idea which provides several hours of absurd fun. Ideal material for PD, I'd say. What the hell, why not? ★★★



***Pong* – the ORIGINAL video game, given a bit of spit and polish for the Amiga.**

PD

LLAMATRON

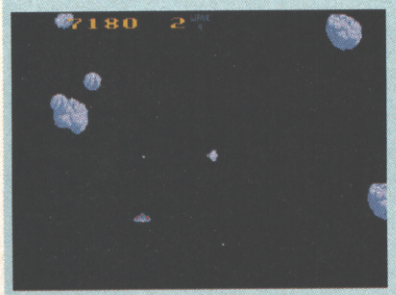
(Available from various PD suppliers)

We jumped the gun on this one a little bit in issue two, but now Jeff's actually finished the Amiga version and it's looking every bit as good as the ST one, and sounding even better. For those of you who missed it, it's an update of Williams' classic arcade shoot-'em-up *Robotron*, fiddled around with to add Jeff's inimitable feel (you know the kind of thing – sheep, goats, yaks etc) and provide an even zappier experience for afficionados of the coin-op golden oldie (which includes everyone on the AMIGA POWER team). *Robotron*'s unique double-joystick control system has been cleverly implemented here, and indeed, there's also the option to actually use two joysticks for complete authenticity. Not that it's all improvements – a couple of the new features are distinctly irritating (particularly the laser gun) and the graphics have a slightly cluttered and unclear look (in *Robotron* you could tell at a glance who the bad guys were, but in *Llamatron* it's all a bit less instinctive) – but all the same this is a highly classy piece of freebie software. Wait a minute, though. *Llamatron* isn't strictly free – if you like the game and decide to keep it, Jeff asks that you send him a fiver as a shareware fee. Then again, in return for that you'll also get a big llama poster, a newsletter, and a copy of Jeff's original version of *Gridrunner* (first released in 1989), so you've got no cause for complaint. Remember, with shareware you try before you buy, so if you don't like the game it won't cost you a penny. (But if you do like it, please play fair and do send Jeff some dosh – we'd like to see this idea encouraged). Not that you're very likely not to like it – if you're a zapping fan, this'll be right up your street.

VERDICT: An excellent game that deserves to be supported by anyone who's ever paid out £25 for crap and been cheesed off about it. ★★★★

The *Robotron* revival starts here, with Jeff Minter's rather spiffing *Llamatron*.

UTTERLY SCANDALOUSLY GOOD BARGAIN OF THE MONTH



***Amigoids* – an excellent *Asteroids* variant, and just one of many great games on this disk.**

AMIGOIDS

(START PD, disk No. 761)

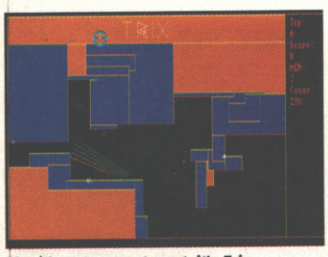
The first thing to say about this disk is that it isn't just *Amigoids*. It also contains *Tanx*, a brilliant and incredibly slick version of the old two-player game where you have two tanks shooting at each other across a mountain range; *Rollerpede*, a fairly pretty and zappy *Centipede* game; *Avatris*, a simultaneous three-player *Tetris* clone, and *Cave Runner*, a very classy *Boulderdash* game. *Amigoids* is probably the star of the disk, though (if only because you need two players for *Tanx*), being far and away the best *Asteroids* game on the Amiga so far. It's packed with options, (including the chance to turn the graphics into a perfect replica of the Atari VCS game of yesteryear!) and plays a really stylish version of the classic game. The whole disk is beautifully presented, and to be able to get it for less than two quid is living proof that miracles can still happen. Restore your faith in humanity and get it now.

VERDICT: Every true games lover should have this in their collection. If you love your Amiga, give it this. ★★★★★

TRIX

(SEVENTEEN BIT, No 841)

This is quite easily the best version of the arcade's *Etch-A-Sketch*-with-enemies game *Qix* on the Amiga, and it's made all the more timely by the impending release of *Volfied*, Taito's coin-op follow-up. It's a full-featured copy of the original, but it also comes on a disk with 10 other games, including a version of the board game *Sorry*, a video poker game, a crude but fast *Missile Command*, a good *Othello*, and several other card and puzzle things. It's worth the paltry 89p asking price for *Trix* alone, and the fact that all of the other games are worth having too makes this a bargain of the highest order.



No, it's not computer art, it's *Trix*.

VERDICT: A strange mix of games to find on one disk, but an entertaining one. ★★★★

AIR ACE

(SEVENTEEN BIT, No 1062)

This game was programmed using Palace's *Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit*, and it's given it a distinctly professional edge. It's a *Flying Shark*-style scrolling blaster, and it's one of the trickier games I've come across this month. There aren't any great innovations on display, but the gameplay (for one or two players at a time) is timeless and challenging, and the attention to detail (right down to the way the screen keeps scrolling for a while after you've lost your last life, just like in the arcade) is lavish. If you're a *Flying Shark* fan, you shouldn't miss this one.

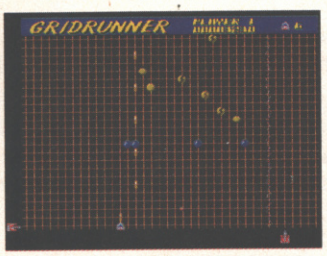
***Air Ace* – Slick, playable, and cheap.**

VERDICT: Tough and pretty blaster that'll pass a good few happy zapping hours, at a price that belies its commercial look. ★★★★

GRIDRUNNER

(SEVENTEEN BIT, No. 971)

Following on from last month's review of Jeff Minter's *Metagalactic Llamas*, here's another conversion of one of the man's ancient zappers, *Gridrunner*. It's essentially a *Centipede* clone with a few added features, but as a fast and violent single-minded blaster, it was unbeatable in its day and it's still pretty good fun now.



Another Minter classic gets PD treatment.

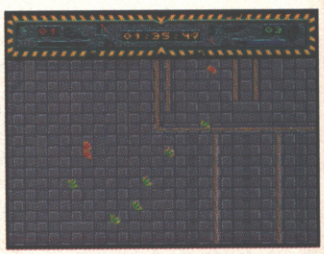
The disk also contains a rather odd *Defender*-like game called *Invaders*, which is cute and enjoyable, and a *Breakout* clone called *Rebound* (which we couldn't get to load on the office Amiga, so it may or may not be any good), and the whole thing is welded together with probably the most slick and professional presentation ever seen in the Public Domain. (Courtesy of programming team Mental Image). When you consider that each of the games on this disk effectively costs less than 30p... well, you know what to do.

VERDICT: Two goodies and a 'might-be' make this disk another essential giveaway. ★★★★

SEVEN TILES

(START PD, disk No. 689)

This game is billed as a cross between *Speedball* and *Kick Off*, and that's pretty much a spot-on assessment. It's a frantic future-sport game with tiny little players bombing around on a metallic pitch, and apart from the slight problem of not really knowing which of your players you're controlling at any particular given time, it's great fun. There isn't really a whole lot to say about it otherwise, except that it's a lot of fun, especially with two players, and though it misses the outright violence of *Speedball*, it's easier to get to grips with than *Kick Off*. Oh, and the continuous crowd noise can get a bit grating on the ears after a while. Not than I'm trying to stop you buying it, you understand.



Eat your hearts out, Bitmap Brothers. *Seven Tiles* even sports a vaguely metallic backdrop to the action.

VERDICT: A corking little game that holds its head up pretty respectably against its major-league counterparts. ★★★

Contact addresses for this month's games: **SEVENTEEN BIT SOFTWARE**, PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX ☎ 0924 366982
NEW WAVE SOFTWARE, PO Box 199, Manchester M1 1JE ☎ 061 839 5378 • **START COMPUTER SYSTEMS**, 20 Holmside,Sunderland SR1 3JE ☎ 091 565 2605

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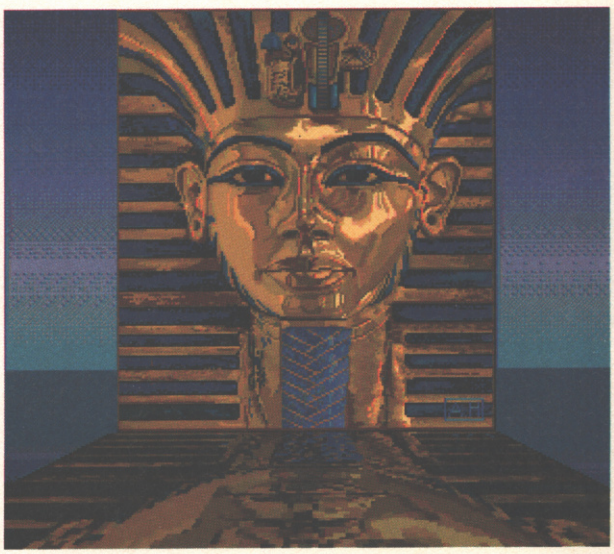

Tut tut!

This picture of King Tut is known by more people in more nations than the pharaoh ever was. It's the symbol of Deluxe Paint, probably the finest piece of graphics software ever written. Deluxe Paint is used by nearly all Amiga games programmers to create the graphics for their games, simply because it's the best.

Now there is a new version of Deluxe Paint out – Deluxe Paint IV. It's probably the most important non-games release on the Amiga in the last three years. It takes Deluxe Paint to the ultimate extreme of Amiga graphics, allowing you to create 4,096-colour pictures using HAM mode.

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And what's that on the cover of the issue? Well, knock me down with a feather if it's not a Coverdisk! And it contains an almost-complete copy of the new **Deluxe Paint IV** as a **fully useable demo**. You'll be able to create your own 4,096-colour pictures and see for yourself how good it is!

Also on this extraordinary Coverdisk is a playable demo of **Magic Pockets**, the latest platform extravaganza from the Bitmap Brothers. You've laughed at the idiots who played it on TV's Motormouth: now give the real thing a go for yourself!

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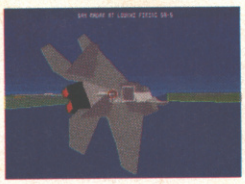

If you've got any sense at all you'll have already nipped out to spend your cash on a copy of MicroProse's astounding military flight simulation *F–15 Strike Eagle II*. We reviewed it last month and lavished a praiseful 87 per cent on what we reckon is quite possibly the best flight sim yet seen on the Amiga.

But that's all yesterday's news. This month, in 'conjunction' with MicroProse, we're giving away SIX flying lessons to anyone with enough savvy to answer this unbelievably dim-witted question. (You'll also have to be amazingly lucky to get picked out of the huge box we've set aside for all the entrants, but we'll gloss over that for now).

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Your trainer will teach you the proper way to fly one of these beasts, so it's not our fault if you cock things up and find yourself buying a fair-sized area of arable land.

Get on with the question!

OK, answer the following question (correctly). Pop your answers on the back of a postcard, and post it to us at: **Amiga Power's Up In The Air Competition, 29, Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW.** ***Don't forget to add your name and address, and be sure your entry gets here before August 31st (this year).***

At last, the question: If you want to fly you'll need to learn how to use a map. So, here's a test of your navigational abilities. You are on a runway in Reykjavik, and you have to fly, in a straight line, to Nairobi. Simply list all the countries you have to fly over. (Clue: get an atlas and a ruler.)

RULES AND REGULATIONS

- The closing date for this competition is August 31st 1991. Entries received after that will be made into paper planes.
- On all matters relating to this competition the editor's decision is final.
- As ever, employees of Future Publishing and MicroProse are not eligible to enter this competition.

AMIGA POWER BACK ISSUES

Copies of the first three issues of AMIGA POWER are still available – though perhaps not for long! Each one costs £3.50 including packing and postage within the UK. To order yours simply fill out the form opposite and send it with a cheque or postal order. (Everything else you need to know is explained on the form).

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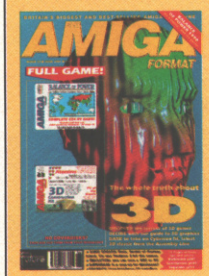

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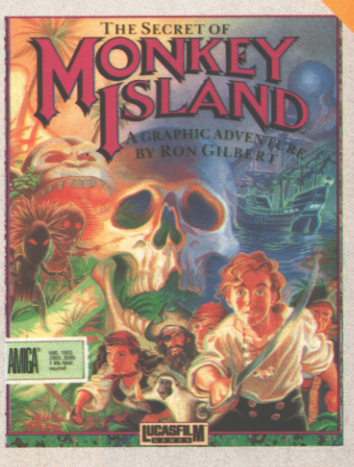

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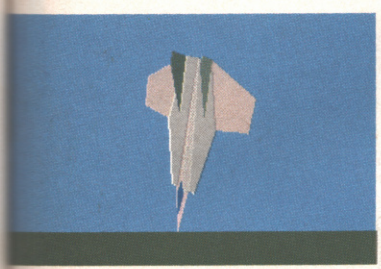

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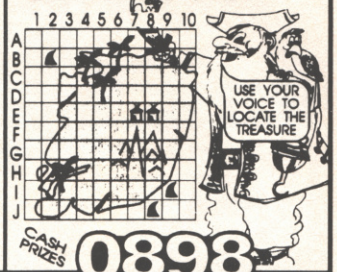

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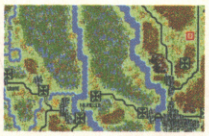

Uppers – A 8-bit classic wargame finally brought to Amiga owners. ***Downers*** – ...but nobody really wanted it anyway. ***The Bottom Line*** – Primitive beyond belief – even wargamers should give it a wide berth. ★

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BACK TO THE FUTURE PART III
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Variety, neat animation, some decent jokes. ***Downers*** – But film licences nearly always feel too thin to be worth 25 quid... ***The Bottom Line*** – ...and this one's no different. Fun but slight. ★★★

BADLANDS
Tengen (Domark) £19.99

Uppers – A close conversion... ***Downers*** – ...of a crap overhead-view arcade race game. ***The Bottom Line*** – So workmanlike its jeans hang over its arse. ★★

THE BALL GAME
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – Similar to the excellent but un-released *Infection* puzzle game. ***Downers*** – The concept is spoiled by senseless changes to the rules. ***The Bottom Line*** – Interesting, but ineptly executed. ★★

THE BARD'S TALE III – THIEF OF FATE
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – A satisfying bout of monster bashing to appeal to the usual *Bard's Tale* mob. ***Downers*** – New ideas and fancy programming are sadly lacking. ***The Bottom Line*** – Monumentally unspectacular, but kinda nice all the same. One for the hardened D&D freak. ★★★

B.A.T.
Ubi Soft £29.99

Uppers – Intergalactic intrigue in a novel interactive comic book style. ***Downers*** – Perhaps a little too left-of-centre for some. ***The Bottom Line*** – Very different, and actually very good. ★★★

BATTLE COMMAND
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Loads of missions, atmospheric solid 3D graphics (ie lots of green), plus a good mix of strategy and blasting. ***Downers*** – Takes a while to get into; some odd (and impossible to complete) missions. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got the self-discipline to persevere past an uninspiring start, this is a worthy follow-up to the classic *Carrier Command*. ★★★

BATTLEMASTER
PSS £29.99

Uppers – A tired fantasy/strategy plot given new lease of life by excellent graphics and oodles of playability. ***Downers*** – Arcade junkies need not apply, despite the abundance of genocidal mayhem. ***The Bottom Line*** – Try it – you may be surprised. ★★★

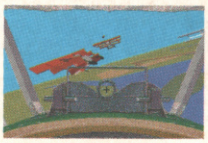
BETRAYAL
Rainbird £29.99

Uppers – Fantasy blended with strategy and some nice graphical touches offers an intriguing hybrid. ***Downers*** – The game really needs several human players to make it exciting. ***The Bottom Line*** – Once again Rainbird attempt something a little bit different. ★★★

BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE
Capstone (Accolade) £24.99

Uppers – In our humble opinion, a most excellent subject for a licence. The game even manages to capture some of the flavour of the bodacious film too. ***Downers*** – But that doesn't stop it being a strong contender for the 'Weakest Gameplay In The World' award. It's also way, way too easy to complete, even at the higher levels. ***The Bottom Line*** – Something of a missed opportunity. Let's hope for better things if they make a game of the film sequel... ★★

BLUE MAX
Mindscape £34.99

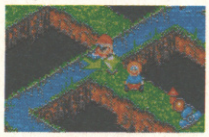


Uppers – Less techie than most flying thangs. Some rather spiffing sound compliments the WWI feel nicely. ***Downers*** – Not a winner in the user-friendliness stakes, and the slow and sloppy main game never (ahem) really takes off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Dull. *Not* the definitive bi-plane game for Biggles buffs it should have been. ★

BOTICS
Krisalis £19.99

Uppers – Nice sound; futuristic graphics. ***Downers*** – Absolutely dire *Pong*-style gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Get out of here! ★

BRAT
Image Works £24.99



Uppers – Very pretty, very smooth, very challenging. ***Downers*** – ...and very, very irritating indeed, especially if you hate the central character. ***The Bottom Line*** – Okay if you play it with the sound off. ★★★

BREACH 2
Impressions £24.99

Uppers – Stick with it and you'll find an immensely rewarding space/strategy blast with loads of levels. ***Downers*** – Scrappy graphics and some awkward quirks will deter many. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loved *Laser Squad*? Then you'll probably take a shine to *Breach 2*. ★★

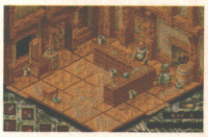
CABAL
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Surprisingly enjoyable *Operation Wolf* variant. ***Downers*** – Kindergarten graphics and no game depth. ***The Bottom Line*** – Reasonable two-player blasting for an hour or three. ★★

CADAVER
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Gorgeously atmospheric graphics; a good mix of puzzling and hacking. ***Downers*** – One or two irritating moments and it's all a bit lacking in the excitement department. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice blend of 3D graphics and adventuring (but it's not a classic). ★★★

CADAVER – THE PAYOFF
Renegade £16.99



Uppers – A wonderful add-on for fans of the first *Cadaver*. ***Downers*** – Not a lot of use for anyone else though. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got the original, this isn't such a bad price to pay for more of the same. Mind you, seventeen quid is a bit steep for what is only an add-on to an old game. ★★★

CAPTIVE
Mindscape £24.99

Uppers – Neat icon-control system enhances an atmospheric (and massive) exploration challenge. ***Downers*** – The game system is quite similar to *Dungeon Master*, so joystick freaks won't find much to enjoy here. ***The Bottom Line*** – A genuine Amiga classic. ★★★★

CARTHAGE
Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Excellent graphics and some nifty arcade sequences. ***Downers*** – But underneath it's a distinctly average strategy game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Despite appearances, not one for the joystick junkies out there. ★★★

CAR-VUP
Core Design £24.99

Uppers – As cute a little platform game as you are ever likely to find, and with a perfectly balanced difficulty level too. ***Downers*** – It's pretty simple – more variety between the levels would've been nice. ***The Bottom Line*** – It might not push back the boundaries of Amiga leisure software, but it's a damn fine game. ★★★★

Welcome to The Bottom Line. Every month AMIGA POWER lists the important full price games released over the past year, complete with price, publisher, points for (or 'Uppers'), points against (or 'Downers') and, of course, the all important Bottom Line. Entries are updated every month, with around thirty new games added and a similar number of older ones removed each time, while ratings are out of a simple five stars (or six, if you count the especially super duper red ones as an extra star) and are explained below. And that's more or less it – your complete guide to the last year's games. Now you've no excuse for buying a piece of crap software again!

THE BOTTOM LINE

RATINGS: ★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

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CENTURION
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Fairly interesting management sections with some nifty battle sequences. ***Downers*** – Two appalling arcade sections blow its chances. ***The Bottom Line*** – Unbalanced. ★★

CHAOS STRIKES BACK
Mirrorsoft £24.99

Uppers – Complex and ingenious puzzles; very user friendly; great sound. ***Downers*** – Slightly old fashioned looking. ***The Bottom Line*** – Engrossing role playing adventure using the *Dungeon Master* game system. ★★★★

CHASE HQ II
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Well, it's not as disastrous as the first conversion. ***Downers*** – But still terminally average. It drives like a brick. ***The Bottom Line*** – It looks as tired as Miami Vice. ★★

CHUCK ROCK
Core Design £24.99

Uppers – Heaps of character with some innovation in the gameplay for once. ***Downers*** – A touch shallow and a touch easy. ***The Bottom Line*** – Pretty brilliant platformer, one of the Amiga's very best. ★★★★

CHUCK YEAGER'S ADVANCED FLIGHT TRAINER 2.0
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – A veritable air force of planes to fly, with piles of options, missions and external views. ***Downers*** – A complete lack of speed, bad disk access and naff perspective put the dampers on the whole affair. ***The Bottom Line*** – Low flying flight sim – fails to stay with the competition. ★★★

CHIP'S CHALLENGE
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Lots and lots of levels; typically well thought out console-style gameplay. ***Downers*** – Simplistic graphics; lack of depth. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good, but not the most characterful of puzzle games. ★★★

CODENAME: ICEMAN
Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Good if you've always fancied a submarine simulator bolted onto Sierra's usual graphic adventure engine. ***Downers*** – Five disks of slow-motion action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not Sierra's best, and a poor introduction to their game style. ★★

THE COLONEL'S BEQUEST
Sierra £34.99

Uppers – Mildly intriguing whodunit, with that ever so familiar Sierra style of presentation. ***Downers*** – Terrible graphics, hours of tedium. ***The Bottom Line*** – Overpriced and over here. You know you don't want to buy it really. ★★

COMBO RACER
Gremlin £19.99

Uppers – Ultra-fast 3D and a track designer up the longevity of the game. ***Downers*** – Naff sound and a totally ridiculous two-player option. ***The Bottom Line*** – Lacks sparkle, but it's far from being a disaster. ★★

COMMANDO
Elite £19.99

Uppers – Lovingly recreated coin-op blast-'em scroller. ***Downers*** – As fashionable as an anorak. ***The Bottom Line*** – Classic stuff, perhaps somewhat overpriced for something so primitive. ★★★

COUGAR FORCE
Tomahawk £19.99

Uppers – The box is quite interesting (actually that's a bit of a lie). ***Downers*** – Everything. The sound, the graphics, the gameplay – all dire in the extreme. ***The Bottom Line*** – A perfect present for pyromaniacs. ★

CRIME WAVE
US Gold £24.95

Uppers – Gore galore; the numerous video interludes spice it up a bit. ***Downers*** – The actual game is dull in the extreme, and the waiting between levels is monstrous. ***The Bottom Line*** – A bog-standard blast-'em-up with knobs on. ★

CYBERCON III
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Brilliant sense of 'being there', and better Freescape than Freescape. ***Downers*** – Predictably, not all that accessible to your average game player. ***The Bottom Line*** – Well worth the effort of getting into. ★★★★★

DAS BOOT
Mindscape £29.99

Uppers – The most accessible sub sim to date. ***Downers*** – ...but it's still not very. ***The Bottom Line*** – Playable, but overpriced. The best in its field. ★★★

DEATH TRAP
Anco £24.99

Uppers – Unusual mix of horizontally-scrolling arcade adventure and magic. ***Downers*** – Naff scrolling and poor sound mar the atmosphere. ***The Bottom Line*** – A refreshingly playable game. ★★

DEFENDER II
ARC £24.99

Uppers – *Defender*, *Defender II* and *Stargate* all in one package. ***Downers*** – Only purists will appreciate the archaic graphics, one or two essential features are omitted (Defender without hyperspace, would you believe?) and the *Defender II* game is duff. ***The Bottom Line*** – Far from perfect, but every home should have one. ★★★★

DEUTEROS
Activision £25.99

Uppers – An incredibly huge and absorbing game, with challenges that seem perfectly paced to be in tune with the developing game-skills of the average player. ***Downers*** – Visually it can be a bit of a yawn. ***The Bottom Line*** – Don't be fooled by the strategy exterior – this is a game that everyone should try. ★★★★★

DISC
Loriciel £24.99

Uppers – A few nice graphical touches. ***Downers*** – Appallingly-designed gameplay with very little actual action. ***The Bottom Line*** – A crappy *Discs Of Tron* rip-off without most of the original's good features. ★

DISTANT ARMIES
Exocet £24.99

Uppers – Ten different variations of chess, all in one package. Nice graphics, tons of background information. ***Downers*** – Definitely for chess-heads only. ***The Bottom Line*** – The ideal present for the cerebral Amiga owner. ★★★

DRAGON BREED
Activision £24.99

Uppers – A near perfect arcade conversion; niftily animated main dragon sprite. ***Downers*** – The zillionth sideways scrolling shoot-'em-up of last year. ***The Bottom Line*** – One instinctively knows when a conversion is right. ★★★★

DRAGONFLIGHT
Thalion £34.99

Uppers – Elegantly designed, perfectly executed fantasy RPG. ***Downers*** – If only it wasn't such a tired old genre. ***The Bottom Line*** – Over-priced, unspectacular, but (let's be fair) still reasonable fun. ★★★

DRAGONS OF FLAME
SSI (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – Almost instant playability – not something you'd expect from a role playing game. ***Downers*** – A bit simplistic for real Dungeons & Dragons fans. ***The Bottom Line*** – An excellent introduction to the new bread of fantasy RPGs. ★★★

DRAGON'S LAIR II
Readysoft £44.95

Uppers – Really incredibly gorgeous cartoon graphics and pretty stunning animation make this a perfect demo of your Amiga's graphic capabilities. ***Downers*** – Minimal player interaction and a ridiculous price tag make this a very expensive way to buy a demo. ***The Bottom Line*** – Undeniably terrible value for money. ★★

ECO PHANTOMS
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – A nice line in H.G.Wells sci-fi theatrics and some unusual sub-sections give *Eco Phantoms* a highly original flavour. ***Downers*** – The parts don't actually add up to very much, and the copy protection system could induce bouts of violence. ***The Bottom Line*** – A reasonable 3D routine masquerading as a game. ★

EDD THE DUCK
Impulze £24.99

Uppers – *Rainbow Islands*-inspired gameplay ensures some level of interest. ***Downers*** – But the whole thing just doesn't inspire, and the difficulty is placed too high for a young audience. ***The Bottom Line*** – Your granny might buy you one. ★★

ELVIRA – MISTRESS OF THE DARK
Accolade £24.99

Uppers – Elvira's gorgeous; the graphics really draw the player in. ***Downers*** – Pity the game itself is nigh on impossible – and it takes five disks! ***The Bottom Line*** – Falls apart due to gratuitous disk swapping and infuriating gameplay. ★★

E-MOTION
US Gold £19.99

Uppers – Weird graphics and mindboggling gameplay set *E-Motion* apart from just about any other game. ***Downers*** – The whole concept may prove difficult to get your mind around. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you can handle the basic idea *E-Motion* offers many joyous hours of swearing and frustration. ★★★★★

ESWAT
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – As conversions go, it's not a complete nightmare... ***Downers*** – ...but let's be honest, the arcade original was duff, duff, duff. ***The Bottom Line*** – A reasonable conversion of a terminally average game. ★

EUROPEAN SUPERLEAGUE
CDS £24.99

Uppers – A surprisingly involving footy strategy thing in the *Football Manager* vein. ***Downers*** – They're not still making these things are they? It would seem that they are, and at full-price too. ***The Bottom Line*** – A dated idea – it sounds tedious but it's actually executed quite commendably. ★★

EXILE
Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Real-world physics incorporated into an arcade game; it's more of a true arcade adventure than most games bearing that tag. Bags of fun. ***Downers*** – Rather primitive graphics, and perhaps not the most instantly playable game ever. ***The Bottom Line*** – A great arcade adventure – and a firm office favourite – but it might not be your cup of tea if you're an action fan. Check it out though. ★★★★★

EXTERMINATOR
Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Very original (read 'very, very odd indeed') arcade thing, well converted to retain the original's feel. ***Downers*** – Confusing initially, but once you've played it for a while it's...confusing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great fun, but it doesn't really make it in the longevity stakes. ★★★

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER
SSI (US Gold) £29.99

Uppers – Takes *Dungeon Master* a step further. Excellent atmosphere and graphics. ***Downers*** – Despite being better than *DM*, it's not actually very different from it at all. ***The Bottom Line*** – The best D&D game yet for the Amiga. (Or, indeed, for anything else.) ★★★★★

5TH GEAR
Hewson £19.99

Uppers – Erm, it's from Hewson. That's its redeeming feature. ***Downers*** – The game itself is a pretty pointless scrolling driving thing (ie it's a disaster). ***The Bottom Line*** – Oh dear. ★

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II
MicroProse £34.99

Uppers – Graphics to make you gasp, sound effects to get your adrenalin pumping and gameplay to leave you in a quivering heap on the floor. ***Downers*** – Despite the shoot-'em-up nature of things, it can all be a touch too much for the less ambitious games player. ***The Bottom Line*** – Quite possibly the last word in flight sims (so far, anyway). ★★★★★

F-19 STEALTH FIGHTER
MicroProse £29.99

Uppers – Strategy and accuracy combine to bring a fresh edge to an over-populated genre. ***Downers*** – If you're good it can get dull, as no one knows you're there! ***The Bottom Line*** – Damn fine simulation. ★★★★

FINAL BATTLE
PSS £24.99

Uppers – Nice 3D isometric graphics. ***Downers*** – The game is rendered unplayable by the impenetrable control system. ***The Bottom Line*** – Flawed. ★★

FIGHTING SOCCER
Activision £24.99

Uppers – The coin-op was mildly amusing(ish). ***Downers*** – You are accused of producing an utterly dull game of the lowest calibre. How do you plead? ***The Bottom Line*** – Guilty as hell. ★

THE FOOL'S ERRAND
Miles Computing £24.95

Uppers – 80 problems to get your brain aching. ***Downers*** – Underneath the gloss, it's really a very average game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not good, not really bad, just okay. ★★

FUTURE BASKETBALL
Hewson £24.99

Uppers – Fast, violent, exciting and well-presented mayhem. ***Downers*** – The poor man's *Speedball 2*. ***The Bottom Line*** – Doesn't have the depth of the Bitmaps' classic, but enormous fun all the same. ★★★

GALAXY FORCE II
Activision £24.99

Uppers – An ambitious attempt at a visually stunning coin-op. ***Downers*** – Everything else. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you know you can't do it why bother trying? ★

GARFIELD – THE WINTER'S TAIL
The Edge £24.99

Uppers – Brilliant Jim Davis graphics. ***Downers*** – Crappy Steve Davis gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – What a wasted licence. For die-hard fans only. ★

GAZZA II
Empire £24.99

Uppers – Gazza doesn't actually appear in the game much. ***Downers*** – Juddering sprites, poor control (just like the man himself), terrible sound – take your pick. ***The Bottom Line*** – It's enough to reduce you to tears. ★

GEM'X
Demonware £24.99

Uppers – Gorgeous graphics, exquisite sound, beautifully simple mental torture. ***Downers*** – Won't change your mind if you're not into puzzlers. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the best puzzle games to date. ★★★★

GERM CRAZY
Electronic Zoo £25.99

Uppers – Not quite as expensive as Mindscape's *Life & Death*. ***Downers*** – But with little else in its favour. ***The Bottom Line*** – Another half-baked idea, not followed through properly. (Where do they all come from?) ★

GHENGHIS KHAN
Infogrames £39.99

Uppers – Stylish and fairly deep historical strategy game. ***Downers*** – Ridiculously expensive though, and requires a fair dose of manual reading. ***The Bottom Line*** – A bit of a cliché, but 'good if you like that sort of thing.' ★★★

GODS
Renegade £25.53

Uppers – Lovely aesthetics, quite involved for a platform game. ***Downers*** – Not quite as good as it's made out to be. ***The Bottom Line*** – Don't believe the hype, but pretty damn good all the same. ★★★★★

GOLDEN AXE
Virgin £24.99
Uppers – Perfect arcade conversion, with every last feature implemented. ***Downers*** – There never really was a lot of variation in the gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Visually stunning, but not different enough to separate it from the usual beat-'em-up. ★★★

THE GOLD OF THE AZTECS
US Gold £24.99
Uppers – The animation gives the hero real character for once, and each screen is a separate challenge. Loads of nice touches. ***Downers*** – The control is a tad awkward until you get used to it. ***The Bottom Line*** – A simpler game than it first appears, but nonetheless a totally absorbing one. ★★★★

GRAND PRIX MASTER
Dinamic £19.95
Uppers – Endorsed by Jorge Martinez (apparently famous on the 80cc motorcycle circuit). ***Downers*** – Handles like a Reliant Robin. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not to put too fine a point on it, useless. ★

GREMLINS II
Elite £24.99
Uppers – Cute as hell, with graphics and sound nigh on perfect. ***Downers*** – It really is far too difficult. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good film licence. ★★★

HAMMERFIST
Vivid Image (Activision) £24.99
Uppers – Graphically adept arcade adventure with tons of playability and plenty to keep you going. ***Downers*** – Iffy sound. ***The Bottom Line*** – Thoroughly enjoyable (if you like that sort of thing). ★★★

HARD DRIVIN' II
Tengen (Domark) £24.99
Uppers – Refined version of the original – less bugs, a track editor, a neat 'head-to-head' option if you link two machines... ***Downers*** – ...but still glitchy and not a patch on the arcade machine. ***The Bottom Line*** – Souped up, but not souped up enough. ★★

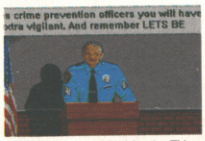
HEART OF THE DRAGON
Avatar Computing £25.99

Uppers – Lots of colours, and an (almost serious) attempt to do something new with the fantasy beat-'em-up genre. ***Downers*** – Beyond the almost impressive technical trickery lies not very much at all really. ***The Bottom Line*** – If your friend has bought it, give it a go. Then laugh very heartily at him. Entertaining in an embarrassing sort of a way. ★

HELTER SKELTER
Audiogenic £19.99
Uppers – Highly original gameplay; password system greatly increases addictiveness; great cartoon sound effects. ***Downers*** – Extremely tricky control method which is difficult to use even with practice. Gets samey after a while. ***The Bottom Line*** – Dubious lasting appeal, but a fun little game if you fancy something a bit different. ★★★

HERO QUEST
Gremlin £25.99

Uppers – Easy to get into, and deceptively addictive. You don't think you've been playing it for long, but suddenly it's Thursday and you're a week late for dinner. ***Downers*** – Not so good as a one-player game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Perhaps surprisingly, a highly entertaining game, and absolutely ideal when you've got game-playing friends round. ★★★★

HILL STREET BLUES
Krisalis £24.99


Uppers – A good feel for the TV series; characters (both player and others) that you can identify with. It's certainly an interesting way to handle a licence. ***Downers*** – Gets repetitive pretty quickly, and it's not the slickest game around. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good next step for someone who's played *Sim City* to death and fancies a new challenge. Limited appeal, though. ★★★

HORROR ZOMBIES FROM THE CRYPT
Millennium £24.99
Uppers – Unusual idea; suitably spooky graphics. ***Downers*** – But let down by the dull platform nature of the game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Funny to watch, but fairly average to play. ★★

HYDRA
Domark £24.99

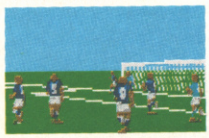
Uppers – Um, nice moving-water effect. ***Downers*** – Terrible control feel; duff, unclear graphics; feeble gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – An almost-competent conversion of a useless game. Why bother? ★

THE IMMORTAL
Electronic Arts £24.99
Uppers – A game which makes real use of 1 meg memory... ***Downers*** – ...which means that a good number of Amiga owners will never get the chance to see it. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not the best fantasy arcade adventure by any means, but the gorgeous graphics lift it well above average. ★★★

INDIANA JONES ADVENTURE
US Gold £19.99
Uppers – More fine-tuning gives *Indy* one of the friendliest control systems yet. It's pretty faithful to the movie too! ***Downers*** – Waiting for the liittle Indy sprite to trek across the screen all the time can get annoying and some of the puzzles are just a wee bit too abstract. ***The Bottom Line*** – Amiga adventures are getting better all the time, but *Indy* is still of the best available. ★★★★

INDIANAPOLIS 500
Electronic Arts £24.95
Uppers – An immensely playable blend of true racing sim and quick track blast, with a nice line in remote camera views (if you've got a 1 meg machine). ***Downers*** – Track repetition hinders lasting appeal. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just fabulous. ★★★★★

INTERNATIONAL SOCCER CHALLENGE
MicroProse £24.99
Uppers – Soccer in 3D? A very brave attempt to do something new with a tired old game-style... ***Downers*** – ...which unfortunately falls flat on its face. ***The Bottom Line*** – Foul. ★

I PLAY 3D SOCCER
Simulmondo £25.99

Uppers – The most dynamic and visually convincing representation of the sport yet. ***Downers*** – The realism is so high that you hardly ever get to kick the ball, and the 3D display system can be downright confusing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, but ultimately flawed. ★★

IRON LORD
Ubi Soft £24.99
Uppers – Cinemaware-style medieval epic with plenty of sub-games and atmospheric presentation. ***Downers*** – It's just too tough for most, and with little real depth. ***The Bottom Line*** – Ultimately repetitive, but fun for a while. ★★

ISHIDO
Accolade £24.99
Uppers – Take *Othello*, add some *Go*, then throw in a few herbs and spices and heat until brown. The result is one piping hot Chinese board game called *Ishido*. ***Downers*** – Irritating dialogue boxes, and the luck element can infuriate. ***The Bottom Line*** – An engaging piece of Chinese culture, which should really be played with a good strong cup of tea. ★★

JAHANGIR KHAN'S CHAMPIONSHIP SQUASH
Krisalis £25.53

Uppers – Easy to play, closely adheres to the rules of the real thing, and there're plenty of options on offer. ***Downers*** – There's not really a lot you can do with a squash game, is there? ***The Bottom Line*** – The best squash game around for the Amiga. (Not that there's much in the way of competition). ★★★

JAMES POND
Millennium £24.99
Uppers – It's slicker than a pot of Brylcreem, with beautifully simple gameplay to instantly hook the unsuspecting player. ***Downers*** – Lacks any real adrenalin-pumping qualities. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loads of initial cute appeal, but really a pretty run-of-the-mill arcade runabout. ★★★

JUDGE DREDD
Virgin £24.99
Uppers – Two ancient sub-games offer a real rave from the grave. ***Downers*** – Another *Judge Dredd* game screwed up totally. No humour, no graphics, no game. ***The Bottom Line*** – One day somebody will do justice (ahem) to the legend of Dredd. One day. ★

JUPITER'S MASTERDRIVE
Ubi Soft £24.99
Uppers – Surprisingly playable race game. More fun than a packet of Jammy Dodgers. ***Downers*** – Unspectacular and overpriced. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not sure why, but it really is jolly good fun. ★★

KEEF THE THIEF
Electronic Arts £24.99
Uppers – Excellent hack, slash and puzzle solving with some superb stylised graphics. ***Downers*** – It still plays like your average role-playing adventure. ***The Bottom Line*** – Respectable Tolkien-esque fare. ★★★

THE KILLING CLOUD
Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Fast-moving and pretty graphics, bags of depth, and a great creation of atmosphere. ***Downers*** – Riddled with inconsistencies and badly-executed ideas. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could have been a contender, but badly lets itself down in the logic stakes. ★★★

THE KILLING GAME SHOW
Psygnosis £24.99
Uppers – Straightforward fun game sharing some aspects of gameplay with *Rainbow Islands*. The interactive replay feature is interesting, innovative, and useful. ***Downers*** – The usual Psygnosis metallic graphics don't really suit; it gets a bit too complicated for its own good later on, detracting from the simplicity that initially makes it so addictive. ***The Bottom Line*** – Despite unusually poor graphics, this is one of Psygnosis' best and most playable games to date. ★★★

LAST NINJA 2
System 3 £24.99
Uppers – Excellent 3D isometric graphics and a genuine attempt to inject some strategy into the martial arts genre. ***Downers*** – The game just isn't cohesive, and it plays like a pig. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not really in the Bruce Lee league (barely scraping Jackie Chan level to be honest). ★★

LANCASTER
Actual Screenshots £24.95
Uppers – Fairly impressive 3D polygon graphics. ***Downers*** – Lack of variation and any real excitement means it barely gets off the ground. ***The Bottom Line*** – Elevates averageness to an art form. ★★

LEISURE SUIT LARRY III
Sierra £34.99
Uppers – Ridiculous, over-sexed plot. Adventuring for consenting adults. ***Downers*** – Slightly obtrusive command parser, and as usual it's over-priced. ***The Bottom Line*** – Check it out – but only if you are over eighteen. ★★★

LEMMINGS
Psygnosis £24.99
Uppers – Utterly bizarre, pleasingly original and totally addictive. Invents a totally new category – the save-'em-up. ***Downers*** – As is the norm with such strikingly original concepts, some may wonder just what all the fuss is about. ***The Bottom Line*** – Love it or loathe it, you can't ignore it. *Lemmings* rule. ★★★★★

LIFE AND DEATH
Mindscape £25.53

Uppers – Excellent packaging (the surgical mask and gloves are wild), and some fairly amusing gameplay keeps things on the boil for a couple of hours. ***Downers*** – Repetition soon sets in – as a long-term challenge it all falls apart quite alarmingly. ***The Bottom Line*** – What's there is quite good, but there's just not enough of it. ★★

LINE OF FIRE
US Gold £24.99
Uppers – Imagine all the Rambo films back-to-back on fast-forward, and you have a good idea how much violence this game contains. ***Downers*** – You also have a pretty good idea of how intelligent it is. ***The Bottom Line*** – An impossible arcade conversion proves totally and utterly impossible. ★★

LOGICAL

Rainbow Arts £19.99
Uppers – The ease of play makes this a nicely accessible puzzler. ***Downers*** – But the amount of time each move takes also makes it a seriously tedious one. ***The Bottom Line*** – In a crowded world of puzzle games, *Logical* is very blunt in the mustard area. ★★

LOOM
Lucasfilm (US Gold) £24.99
Uppers – Great atmosphere, enhanced by the accompanying tape, booklets etc. It's certainly a lavish package. ***Downers*** – An adventure without typing? It certainly won't appeal to purists, and the 'audio drama' is laughable. ***The Bottom Line*** – Once again Lucasfilm strive for something different. The results are interesting, if not totally successful. ★★★

LOST PATROL
Ocean £24.99
Uppers – Graphics are nothing short of stunning, and the music is wonderful, brooding and tense... ***Downers*** – Unfortunately the game itself is incredibly tedious (if you can actually find one in there) and the play area is only two screens wide! ***The Bottom Line*** – Atmospheric but lacking any playability. One for Vietnam obsessives only. ★★

LORDS OF CHAOS
Blade £24.99

Uppers – Great control system, comprehensive and logical. Lots of levels equal great lastability. ***Downers*** – Very little action; not much compulsion to reach your rather abstract goal. ***The Bottom Line*** – A disappointing game from Julian Gollop, not up to his usual standard. Wait for *Laser Squad 2*. ★★★

LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE
Gremlin £24.99
Uppers – A wealth of control options lets you make the game more arcadey or simulationy according to preference. Bags of 'feel'. ***Downers*** – The other cars are a bit flat-looking, and half the screen is wasted in one-player mode. (You don't appear to be able to turn the annoying music off either). ***The Bottom Line*** – An extremely good driving game, even more fun with two players. There's even a freebie bonus game! ★★★★

LUPO ALBERTO
Idea £25.53

Uppers – Charming characters, a terribly translated manual, and goofy gameplay make it ideal for kids of all ages. ***Downers*** – The animation is funny for all the wrong reasons. Loveable but really rather crap, and shockingly unpolished for a game at this price. ***The Bottom Line*** – A game sure to cause argument. A definite case of try before you buy. ★★

MAGIC FLY
Electronic Arts £24.99
Uppers – Very challenging. ***Downers*** – But not too thrilling, and who wants wireframe 3D in 1991? ***The Bottom Line*** – You may not find it worth all the bother of getting into it. ★★

MANIX
Millennium £24.99
Uppers – Charmingly surreal. ***Downers*** – But it's just an updated *Q-Bert* really, isn't it? ***The Bottom Line*** – Never really gets its hooks into you. ★★

MASTERBLAZER
Rainbow Arts £24.99
Uppers – Excellent two player mode, fast 3D action – all in all a respectable updating of the original future-sport game. ***Downers*** – Despite the new features, *Masterblazer* looks and feels dated. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun for a few hours, but too simplistic to hold any lasting appeal. ★★★

MEAN STREETS
US Gold £24.99
Uppers – Many different styles combine well for (ahem) a wide-ranging gameplay experience. ***Downers*** – Of course, other people might just say 'unfocused'. Dragged down by disk swapping. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good solid entertainment. A bit like Lenny Henry, really. ★★★

MEGA TRAVELLER 1
Empire £30.64

Uppers – Terrifying depth, friendly and helpful controls, great atmosphere, excellent balance of strategy and action. ***Downers*** – It might all seem a bit too familiar to *Elite* players; occasional long disk-access pauses can irritate. ***The Bottom Line*** – A wonderful piece of role-playing software that everyone should play at least once. After that, you're unlikely to want to stop. ★★★★★

MERCS
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Faithful conversion of the coin-op, good-looking and fast-moving... ***Downers*** – ...but still just another *Commando* clone. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great at what it does, but you're likely to want rather more from a game in this day and age. ★★★

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Well-balanced gameplay with a smooth difficulty curve makes it stand out from a hundred similar coin-op conversions. Actually more playable than the arcade original. ***Downers*** – Control is awkward at first; could be a touch faster. ***The Bottom Line*** – Best of its type. ★★★

MIGHTY BOMB JACK
Elite £24.99

Uppers – Classic gameplay with added 16-bit features like, erm, power-ups. ***Downers*** – Sprawling levels lose the original's frantic urgency. ***The Bottom Line*** – Dull, dull, and then again dull. ★

MIG-29
Domark £29.99

Uppers – So real you'll be be hanging pictures of Gorby on your wall. ***Downers*** – Only five missions, with little in the way of excitement. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, but ultimately too techie for most Amiga owners. ★★★

M1 TANK PLATOON
MicroProse £24.99

Uppers – Cheaper than a real tank. ***Downers*** – Needs a lot of perseverance. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not as much fun as actually having a tank platoon on the M1. ★★

MONOPOLY
Leisure Genius £19.99

Uppers – A faithful version of the classic (to say the least) board-game. ***Downers*** – Who the hell wants to play a board-game on their computer anyway? ***The Bottom Line*** – Competently done, but arguably quite pointless. ★★

MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS
Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Some genuinely funny humour, captures the style of the TV show without just rehashing it. ***Downers*** – Basic gameplay is pretty, erm, basic. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still fun after you've seen all the jokes. ★★★

MOONSHINE RACERS
Millennium £24.99

Uppers: Erm, great hillbilly music. ***Downers:*** Slow, graphically horrible, totally derivative. ***The Bottom Line***: Almost as bad as Amiga *Chase HQ*, and you've got to admit that's pretty damn bad. ★

MUDS
Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Quite funny. ***Downers*** – Do we really need another rugby/basketball/ violence-based future sport? ***The Bottom Line*** – Giving everything silly names doesn't make this game different to the dozen others it's just the same as. ★★

MYSTICAL
Infogrames £24.99

Uppers – Fresh graphical approach to the the usual fantasy scenario. ***Downers*** – Really badly-thought-out two-player mode. ***The Bottom Line*** – An uninspired *Gauntlet* clone. ★★

'NAM
Domark £24.95

Uppers – Heavily researched, convincing and (dirty word) educational strategic war game. ***Downers*** – Very hard to win, the whole serious look to the thing could be a turn off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Political as well as tactical decision making gives a new dimension to war games. ★★★

NARC
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Great blood-spattering action; very close to the coin-op. ***Downers*** – Very dodgy on the playability front (not to say morally). ***The Bottom Line*** – Limited gorefest that's really too frustrating to be enjoyable. ★★

NARCO POLICE
Dinamic £24.99

Uppers – Looks excellent – the basic design would make for an excellent Aliens clone. ***Downers*** – Computer takes a 'creative' attitude towards obeying control commands. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loud and action-packed blaster for expert commandos. ★★

NEBULUS
Hewson £19.99

Uppers – Truly innovative gameplay and graphics which wouldn't look out of place in an arcade. The climb up/fall down routine makes it almost too addictive for safety. ***Downers*** – Not for softies – some could find this just too frustrating. ***The Bottom Line*** – Classically simple design makes for a game that won't let go once it gets its hooks into you (which will be about two minutes after you pick it up). ★★★★

NEUROMANCER
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – The only contender in its field. ***Downers*** – That doesn't make it any good, though. ***The Bottom Line*** – None of the atmosphere of the book. Not so much Chiba City as Average City. ★★

NIGHT SHIFT
Lucasfilm (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – Graphically innovative and full of character. ***Downers*** – Detail-packed background can make it hard to see where the actual platforms are; more time spent loading than playing. ***The Bottom Line*** – A few instructions would work wonders, but the game's overwhelming charm pulls it through. ★★★

NEW YORK WARRIORS
Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Reasonably atmospheric, undemanding blaster. ***Downers*** – Oh God, *Ikari Warriors Part 844194365408354*. ***The Bottom Line*** – You can buy much better, cheaper. ★

NINE LIVES
ARC £24.99

Uppers – Cute and inventive platform fun. ***Downers*** – Tougher than Mike Tyson in a suit of armour. With a bazooka. ***The Bottom Line*** – You've got as much chance of finishing it as Wile E. Coyote has of catching Road Runner. ★★★

NINJA REMIX
System 3 £24.99

Uppers – Closer to what *Last Ninja 2* should have been. Extremely high-quality graphics... ***Downers*** – ...hiding a near-terminal lack of gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Ideal for game players with dicky hearts, otherwise keep the electro-shock equipment handy for those, er, sedate moments. ★★

NINJA WARRIORS
Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Novel 'Cinemascope'-esque screen layout. Dynamic Loading System is a boon but doesn't get rid of irritating swapping. ***Downers*** – Extremely repetitive action palls quickly. ***The Bottom Line*** – Even for a game of this type, the gameplay is too limited to hold the attention for any length of time. ★★

NITRO
Psygnosis £24.99

Uppers – Groovy graphics, smooth scrolling, excellent car-handling. ***Downers*** – A practically infinite-credit system means the game has little sense of urgency. You have to guess the course on later levels. ***The Bottom Line*** – Needs more in the way of immediate danger to be addictive, but (unlike many similar games) is as fun in one player mode as with a couple of chums. ★★★

OBITUS
Psygnosis £34.99

Uppers – Intro would make a great Amiga *Deathchase* game. ***Downers*** – *Obitus* itself is a dull *Dungeon Master* rip-off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Boring and ridiculously priced. ★★

ONSLAUGHT
Hewson £24.99

Uppers – Lovely sound and music; lots of depth. ***Downers*** – Very confusing graphics and gameplay, and the main sequences are technically below the level of your average budget game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Caught between the two stools of wargaming and platform zap games, this isn't a very good example of either. ★★

OOOPS UP
Demonware £24.95

Uppers – Arcade fun in the *Pang*, er, 'tradition'. ***Downers*** – Colossally inferior to the real thing. ***The Bottom Line*** – The excellent sampled music isn't enough to save this bare-faced rip-off. Check out the real thing instead. ★★

OPERATION STEALTH
Delphine (US Gold) £24.99

Uppers – More of a James Bond feel than any official James Bond game. Not too much disk faffing about either (which makes a change). ***Downers*** – Arcade sequences will irritate the adventure purist. It's also tedious having to examine every pixel of every location by hand. ***The Bottom Line*** – The best game of its type so far. A reasonably friendly operating system and an immense challenge. ★★★★

OPERATION THUNDERBOLT
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Utterly mindless genocidal slaughterfest; perhaps the best *Op Wolf* style game to date. ***Downers*** – More of the coin-op's appeal is down to the cabinet-mounted Uzi than you might think, leaving the Amiga version somewhat 'flat'. ***The Bottom Line*** – Everything you could expect a conversion of *Operation Thunderbolt* to be. ★★★

ORIENTAL GAMES
MicroStyle £24.99

Uppers – Joystick editor makes fighting user-friendly. ***Downers*** – So out-of-date it's wearing flares. ***The Bottom Line*** – Misleading title disguises a standard beat-'em-up. ★★

PANG
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A perfect arcade conversion; novel two player mode and heaps of addictiveness make it the last word in cute games. ***Downers*** – The long wait between games is a bit of a bind. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'll be blowing bubbles forever. ★★★★★

PARADROID 90
Hewson £24.99

Uppers – Nothing compares to *Paradroid* in terms of original gameplay and elegant bas-relief graphics. ***Downers*** – Old C64 games players may be disappointed with the lack of new features. ***The Bottom Line*** – A five year old game idea, and it still wipes the floor with most competition. ★★★★★

PGA TOUR GOLF
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Excellently presented, comprehensive, and easy as pie to get into. ***Downers*** – There's a limited amount of scope to any golf game, and *PGA* doesn't even try to transcend it. ***The Bottom Line*** – The pinnacle of Amiga golf so far. ★★★★★

PHOTON STORM
ARC £24.99

Uppers – Incredibly frantic blasting experience. ***Downers*** – Not one to buy if you want to show off your shiny new Amiga's snazzy graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you're a Minter fan you'll love it. A finely-tuned adrenalin machine. ★★★★

PICK'N'PILE
Ubi Soft £19.99

Uppers – Fascinating mix of *Puzznic* and *Boulder Dash*. ***Downers*** – 8-bit graphics don't help visual clarity any. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not enough variation to sustain it for long. ★★

PLOTTING
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A novelty – a puzzle game with cute graphics! ***Downers*** – Gets samey after a while, less freedom than other puzzlers makes for a shorter life-span. ***The Bottom Line*** – A charming little game, but eventually dull. ★★★★

POLICE QUEST 2
Sierra (Activision) £34.95

Uppers – Er, very realistic sim of a policeman's lot. ***Downers*** – ie half the game is form-filling. ***The Bottom Line*** – Too much like a tedious day at the office. ★★

POPULOUS
Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – Totally unique gameplay and smooth 3D isometric graphics add up to a game with depth and sparkle. ***Downers*** – The icon control system really is very confusing. ***The Bottom Line*** – An essential for all open-minded Amiga owners. ★★★★★

THE POWER
Demonware £24.99

Uppers – Heaps of levels and a screen designer keep lasting appeal up, and the music is excellent. ***Downers*** – A touch derivative, and lacks that indefinable something that makes a puzzle game great. ***The Bottom Line*** – Try before you buy – you might like it, but it's rather average to our eyes. ★★★

POWER DRIFT
Activision £19.99

Uppers – All the arcade's tracks, characters, and secret features. ***Downers*** – The graphics can get very confusing, and the gameplay isn't really that close to the original. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good stab at a very difficult conversion, but not quite good enough. ★★★

POWERMONGER
Electronic Arts £29.99

Uppers – The brave new face of wargames, *Powermonger* is a game like no other. ***Downers*** – ...despite initially looking suspiciously like *Populous*. ***The Bottom Line*** – Despite similarities to a certain other title, *Powermonger* really is an excellent game in its own right, as its No 32 placing in the Amiga Power All-Time Top 100 clearly shows. ★★★★

PP HAMMER AND HIS PNEUMATIC WEAPON
Demonware £25.53

Uppers – Nicely old-fashioned platform action. Plenty of scope for double entrendres too. ***Downers*** – Annoying niggles and a tendency towards over-complication spoil it a bit. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good, but it could easily have been a lot better. ★★★

PREHISTORIK
Titus £25.53

Uppers – Some excellent cartoon graphics and humorous touches make it an instantly likeable game. ***Downers*** – Suffers in comparison to *Toki* and *Chuck Rock*. Needs a number of rough edges polishing up. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice enough little caveman romp, but it's not really an essential purchase. ★★★

PREDATOR 2
Image Works £25.99

Uppers – Lots and lots of zapping to be done and, er, that's about it really. ***Downers*** – Poor colour choice, unimaginative gameplay, bad control feel. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not as good as *Operation Wolf*, and now some £18 more expensive. Don't bother. ★★

PRINCE OF PERSIA
Broderbund £24.99

Uppers – Phenomenal animation, loads of atmosphere and some good old-fashioned gameplay. ***Downers*** – Control is initially tricky, and getting sent to the start of a level every time you die is always annoying. ***The Bottom Line*** – Technically stunning and great fun at the same time. Why can't all games be like this? ★★★★★

PRO TENNIS TOUR 2
Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Possibly the most realistic sports sim to grace the Amiga, with features galore. ***Downers*** – So if you hate the real thing, you won't go for this. ***The Bottom Line*** – Nothing short of wonderful. ★★★★

PURSUIT TO EARTH
Exocet £19.95

Uppers – Reminiscent of *Gyruss*, the classic arcade zapper. ***Downers*** – But completely crap. ***The Bottom Line*** – About as much fun as getting hit by a real Exocet. ★

PUZZNIC
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Classically simple and very addictive, not to mention

original. ***Downers*** – Infuriatingly tough on later levels. ***The Bottom Line*** – Don't be put off by the useless graphics, this is a wonderful brain teaser. ★★★★

QUEST FOR GLORY II – TRIAL BY FIRE

Sierra £40.85

Uppers – Sorry, can't think of any. Oh no, wait, you do get lots of disks for your money. ***Downers*** – But no game to put on them. Incompetently programmed, staggeringly-overpriced trash. ***The Bottom Line*** – Possibly the worst Amiga game you will ever see. Avoid it like an bad-tempered tiger with toothache. ★

RAILROAD TYCOON

MicroProse £29.99

Uppers – Frightening amount of depth. ***Downers*** – Very slow to get into (and very slow even when you *do* get into it). ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got a lot of time to invest in it, well worth a look. ★★★★

RALLY CROSS CHALLENGE

Anco £19.95

Uppers – Well-programmed *Super Sprint* clone that's great fun with multiple players. ***Downers*** – Limited lastability. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still one of the best in its field, but that's more down to lack of competition than anything else. ★★

RANX

Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Totally ideologically unsound. ***Downers*** – Totally ideologically unsound. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brilliantly-presented but ultimately limited comic strip beat-'em-up. Ideologically unsound. ★★

RED STORM RISING

MicroProse £24.99

Uppers – Unbelievably realistic, the best of its kind. ***Downers*** – Almost total lack of moving graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – A strategist's dream, but if you really want a submarine experience this realistic, go join the navy. ★★

REVELATION

Krisalis £19.99

Uppers – Neat idea – a puzzle game based on safe cracking. ***Downers*** – Too complex to just pick up and play – bad news for a puzzler. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not bad, but could have been better presented (and who thought up that utterly meaningless name?) ★★

RICK DANGEROUS 2

MicroStyle £24.99

Uppers – Cute, colourful, action packed, immensely playable and better paced than *Rick 1*... ***Downers*** – ...but really not all that dissimilar, and still packed with far too much in the way of unforeseeable danger. ***The Bottom Line*** – Loveable. ★★★

ROBOCOP 2

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Great graphics, generally excellent presentation. ***Downers*** – Awkward controls, some infuriating gameplay traits, and it's all a touch too formulaic. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could have been a good deal better. ★★★

ROGUE TROOPER

Krisalis £24.99

Uppers – Fairly entertaining arcade adventure with devious but logical puzzles and an excellent free collectors' comic. ***Downers*** – One life – one mistake and you're all the way back to the start of the first level. (Aaarrgh!) ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun for the persistent, and a good licence for a change. ★★

SATAN

Dinamic £19.99

Uppers – You won't finish it in a hurry. ***Downers*** – Spookily similar to *Black Tiger*. ***The Bottom Line*** – The game that put the 'age' in 'average'. ★★

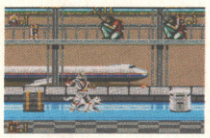
SEARCH FOR THE KING

Accolade £34.99

Uppers – Superb Elvis gags and attention to detail (particularly in the graphics) mean graphic adventure fans will take to it immediately. ***Downers*** – Accolade blow it to a certain extent with their inefficient parser system. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still a long way to go before it competes with the likes of *Monkey Island*. ★★★

SHADOW DANCER

US Gold £25.99



Uppers – Looks lovely, and the ninja dog sidekick adds at least a little to a rather tired game style. ***Downers*** – It's that same old repetitive beat-'em-up gameplay again. ***The Bottom Line*** – A very classy conversion of a totally generic slasher. ★★

SHADOW OF THE BEAST 2

Psygnosis £34.95

Uppers – Jaw-dropping graphics, and, er, um... that's it. ***Downers*** – Your first few games will be shorter than the accessing pauses between them. The Roger Dean T-shirt is nauseous. ***The Bottom Line*** – £34.95? Nowhere near enough game for such a price tag! ★★

SHADOW WARRIORS

Ocean £24.99

Uppers – Look, leave me alone, it's close to the arcade game, what else do you want me to say? ***Downers*** – Very tough and completely unrewarding. ***The Bottom Line*** – There's about as much game in here as there is in an empty crate with 'Tomatoes from Greenland' stamped on it. ★

SHANGHAI

Activision £19.99

Uppers – Based on an ancient Chinese tile game, so you know it's going to torture your mind, and it does. Friendly presentation too, and the multi-player against-the-clock games are action-packed enough for the most frenzied blasting fan. ***Downers*** – Slightly fiddly graphics can play havoc with your eyes. Nothing a halfway-decent monitor won't cure, though. ***The Bottom Line*** – Scarily gripping for a game with no moving graphics. The first time you do it you'll want to take out an advert in The Times to tell everybody. ★★★★★

SHOCKWAVE

Digital Magic £24.99

Uppers – Lightning fast arcade quality *Afterburner/Star Wars* graphics. ***Downers*** – Tactical sections get in the way. ***The Bottom Line*** – A potentially great arcade monster shoot-'em-up ruined by trying to be brainy as well. ★★★

SIMULCRA

MicroStyle £24.99

Uppers – Mad, frantic 3D blast. ***Downers*** – Not much brain-expanding involved. ***The Bottom Line*** – An amphetamine classic. ★★★

SIRIUS 7

CRL £24.99

Uppers – Technically adequate. ***Downers*** – No thought, no imagination, no game, no fun. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost as action-packed as *Xenon 2*. In pause mode. ★

SKI OR DIE

Electronic Arts £24.99

Uppers – *Skate Or Die* but with snow. ***Downers*** – *Skate Or Die* but with snow. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun (for a while) with friends, but basically an old fashioned, patchy collection of unimpressive sub games. ★

SKULL AND CROSSBONES

Domark £24.99

Uppers – It's all reasonably true to the coin-op. ***Downers*** – Pity it was so crap then, isn't it? Appallingly slow, critically limited and bug-ridden. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'd have more fun being keelhauled. ★

SPEEDBALL II

Image Works £24.99

Uppers – The ultimate future sport game to date – fast, brutal, enormously playable. The Bitmaps' finest moment. ***Downers*** – Teams can become hard to tell apart in the heat of the action. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the all-time great Amiga games. Buy or die. ★★★★★

SPELLBOUND

Psyclapse £24.99

Uppers – Well-drawn backdrops, and, erm, the packaging is nice. ***Downers*** – Almost no in-game sound, practically nothing in the way of action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Hugely boring arcade adventure thing that's overpriced by £20. ★

THE SPY WHO LOVED ME

Domark £24.99

Uppers – Lovely tiny graphics, tough gameplay that nonetheless rewards a bit of effort. They've spent a good deal of effort on this one. ***Downers*** – Only half-a-dozen levels – all completeable after some practice – means it won't last all that long. ***The Bottom Line*** – Easily the best Bond game so far, and a fun *Spy Hunter* clone into the bargain, though (to be honest) not something you'll want to play for months. ★★★

SPINDIZZY WORLDS

Activision £24.99

Uppers – Another example of an 8-bit classic brought bang up to date with a sprawling play area and loads of new features. ***Downers*** – Bizarre controls to get to grips with and the graphics could be better. ***The Bottom Line*** – Superlative game design, and total addiction. Frustrating as hell, but nonetheless a masterpiece of 8-bit updating without losing the original spirit. ★★★★★

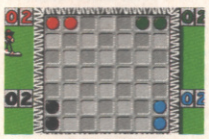
SPIRIT OF EXCALIBUR

Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Plenty of variation, and it certainly all looks lovely. ***Downers*** – Pitifully slow, and the different sections don't really seem to gel together. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you've got a few hours to kill while you're waiting for a train, this is a game that you can load up without fear of it causing you to miss it. (On the other hand, standing on the platform might be more fun). ★★

SPOT

Leisure Genius £25.99



Uppers – Brilliantly designed Othello-based board game which still manages to offer something new and different (and even supports up to four players). ***Downers*** – The presentation lacks polish in places. ***The Bottom Line*** – A class board-like strategy act. ★★★★★

STARGLIDER II

Rainbird £24.99

Uppers – Instant 3D blasting appeal, with extra depth for those who want it. ***Downers*** – Slightly too repetitive in the long-term. ***The Bottom Line*** – Still one of the best *Star Wars*-inspired releases on the Amiga. ★★★

STARBLADE

Palace £24.99

Uppers – Original concept. ***Downers*** – Sod all sound-wise, technically nothing to shout about. ***The Bottom Line*** – Run-of-the-mill. ★★

ST. DRAGON

Storm £24.99

Uppers – Lovely graphics, a helpful software autofire option, and a challenging difficulty curve lift this out of the morass of horizontal zappers. The Dynamic Loading System is an infinitely wonderful idea. ***Downers*** – A bit too tough for most, and the power-ups are unexciting. ***The Bottom Line*** – One of the few sideways-scrolling shoot-'em-ups that you really should own. ★★★★

STELLAR 7

Dynamix (Sierra) £24.99

Uppers – Appealingly old-fashioned blast from the past in the form of (yet another!) up-dated *Battlezone*. ***Downers*** – Ever-so-slightly sluggish vector graphics and optimistic pricing make it a bit of a luxury. ***The Bottom Line*** – Satisfyingly mindless – but that's both a strength and a weakness. ★★

STORMBALL

Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Reasonably passable graphics. ***Downers*** – Utterly dire game design, no feeling of speed or excitement, highly confusing and largely pointless. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you're looking for a good way to waste £25, throw it down a drain rather than buy this. ★

STRIDER 2

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Good animation and plenty of challenge. ***Downers*** – Very little advance on *Strider*, and shoddily presented. ***The Bottom Line*** – It's everything that's bad about sequels, and bears all the hallmarks of a rush job. ★★

STUN RUNNER

Tengen (Domark) £24.99

Uppers – Er...the music isn't entirely crap. ***Downers*** – Hopelessly slow, graphically primitive, a terminal lack of excitement. ***The Bottom Line*** – We'd rather see a great conversion of *Galaxians* than someone make a pig's ear of a game they knew they couldn't convert in the first place. ★

SUPERCARS 2

Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – The two-player mode enhances things considerably. ***Downers*** – Arguably less playable than the original. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you only want to play it in one player mode, buy the *16 Bit Hitz* compilation featuring the original *Supercars* instead. ★★★

SUPER MONACO GP

US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Well-programmed and fun. ***Downers*** – Not much like the coin-op. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good racing game, but don't expect the arcade. ★★★

SUPER OFF-ROAD RACER

Virgin £19.99

Uppers – Flawless arcade conversion from Graftgold, the *Rainbow Islands* people. ***Downers*** – The track sequence, though identical to the original, is silly and control is just a tad over-sensitive. ***The Bottom Line*** – The Amiga's best *Super Sprint* game yet, but with some annoying niggles that stop it being the true classic it might have been. ★★★★

SUPER SKWEEK

Loriciel £19.99

Uppers – Cute *Defusion/Painter*-based game with power-ups and add-ons galore. ***Downers*** – Perhaps a little too French for most of us, and perhaps a little too similar to *Skweek* too. ***The Bottom Line*** – Could do with having another fiver chopped off the price, but otherwise great fun. ★★★

SUPER WONDER BOY

Activision £19.99

Uppers – Perfect difficulty curve lets you get just a little bit further every go. Cute graphics add to the charm and the shops where you can spend your gold give it a little extra scope. ***Downers*** – Slightly lacking in action, too slow for some. Not exactly modern looking. ***The Bottom Line*** – Great game in the *Mario* vein, but with less enemies and more depth. ★★★

SUPREMACY

Virgin £29.99

Uppers – Galactic empire-building with some smart graphics. ***Downers*** – The number based gameplay renders it all completely uninteresting (to us, anyway. Some people think it's the best thing since sliced bread). ***The Bottom Line*** – For accountants and gullible people only. ★★

SWITCHBLADE II

Gremlin £25.99

Uppers – Gorgeous console-like graphics, tried-and-tested gameplay, packed full of detail and lovely touches. ***Downers*** – Perhaps just a little too simple. ***The Bottom Line*** – Absolutely superb. Arguably the best Amiga platform game to date. ★★★★★

SWIV

Storm £24.99

Uppers – Looks good, sounds good, comes with a neat two-player option – and all in one (massive) level too! ***Downers*** – There aren't any (unless you find all those drab military-style colours a bit depressing). ***The Bottom Line*** – Frantic – one of the best shoot-'em-ups we've seen. ★★★★★

SWORDS AND GALLEONS

Idea £25.99

Uppers – Uses the classic trading game style to great effect. ***Downers*** – Easy to complete and the stupid omission of a save game option knocks a battleship-sized hole in the game's lasting appeal. ***The Bottom Line*** – A minority interest sort of affair, but strangely compelling despite the flaws. ★★

TETRIS

Infogrames £19.99

Uppers – Well, it is still *Tetris*. ***Downers*** – But it's probably the worst version yet seen on the Amiga, and that's saying something. ***The Bottom Line*** – Completely stinky. (Stick with the PD versions). ★

THEME PARK MYSTERY

Image Works £24.99

Uppers – Great feel; looks and sounds lovely. ***Downers*** – Arcade sections are fairly pointless. ***The Bottom Line*** – Games which mix adventures with arcade sequences always suffer for it, and *Theme Park Mystery* is no exception. ★★

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND
US Gold £25.99

Uppers – The closest thing yet to a fully interactive story. Enormous playability, pleasing puzzles and great dollops of – yes! – genuinely witty humour come together to form something very glorious indeed. ***Downers*** – Despite the five disks, you'll still need a full meg, and once the game is completed you'll probably never come back to it again. ***The Bottom Line*** – An adventure that looks and plays better than almost any arcade game. Software heaven.★★★★★

TEAM SUZUKI
Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – Very fast, with some pretty hairy track views. Unintentionally hilarious replay feature. ***Downers*** – Insanely sensitive to control. ***The Bottom Line*** – Enough fun to keep you playing until you can at least stay on the road for five seconds at 60mph, but a bit too unrealistic to compete with *Indy 500*. ★★★

TEAM YANKEE
Empire £29.99

Uppers – The action slant on the standard tank sim makes it more immediate and accessible... ***Downers*** – ...but what a pity it lacks depth and excitement. ***The Bottom Line*** – Doesn't work as a strategy sim or arcade blast. Try *Sherman M4* if you must own a tank simulation of some description. ★★

TEENAGE MUTANT HERO TURTLES
Mirrorsoft £24.99

Uppers – It doesn't have the word 'Ninja' in the title...***Downers*** – ...but even that doesn't save it from being utterly awful in every way. ***The Bottom Line*** – You'd have more fun playing with a real turtle. Or a real mutant. ★

THUNDERSTRIKE
Millennium £24.99

Uppers – *Defender* for the 3D generation. ***Downers*** – An absolute PC classic, so why is the Amiga conversion so appalling? ***The Bottom Line*** – A seriously average game which could have been an absolute gem. *Thunderstrike*? More like *Chunderstrike*. ★★

TIE BREAK
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – More of a simulation than a *Pong* game. ***Downers*** – Whoever thought up the 'scrolling court' idea should be shot.***The Bottom Line*** – Hideously complex control makes this one more hassle than it's worth. ★★

THE TIME MACHINE
Activision £24.99

Uppers – It's nice to play a game that doesn't have 10,000 screens for a change. ***Downers*** – Everything has to be done ten times. ***The Bottom Line*** – Too clever by half. ★★

TOKI
Ocean £25.39

Uppers – The (latest) definitive coin-op conversion. Beautiful platform action to make you go ape. ***Downers*** – The sound is slightly disappointing, and the game is simply too small. ***The Bottom Line*** – What's there is brilliant, if only there was more of it. ★★★★★

TORVAK THE WARRIOR
Core Design £24.99

Uppers – Beautiful, gloomy graphics. ***Downers*** – Incredibly slow and unremarkable *Rastan* game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Unresponsive control and a talentless hero cripple the gameplay. Check out *Chuck Rock* to find out what Core can really do when they put their minds to it. ★

TOTAL RECALL
Ocean £24.99

Uppers – A fair bit of gameplay variation. ***Downers*** – Unfriendly controls, uninspired design. ***The Bottom Line*** – Solid but unexciting. No feel for the movie. (And couldn't they afford the rights to use Arnie's real face?) ★★

TOURNAMENT GOLF
Elite £24.99

Uppers – Authentic arcade port. ***Downers*** – Nobody ever played the arcade game. ***The Bottom Line*** – Completely average golfing yawnerama, now well out-evolved in all respects by *PGA Tour Golf*. ★★

TOWER FRA
Thalion £24.99

Uppers – Yes, you guessed it, it's an air traffic control tower simulation. Not as boring as it sounds. ***Downers*** – It's still fairly boring though. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good training for the next generation of air traffic controllers. ★★

TOYOTA CELICA RALLY
Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – Very impressively detailed – a lot of effort has been taken to get an authentic feel here. ***Downers*** – Be prepared to dig deep to find the actual gameplay, though. ***The Bottom Line*** – Perhaps too good a simulation to be much fun to play. ★★

3D CONSTRUCTION KIT
Domark/Incentive £49.99

Uppers – Creating your own games (or simply designing little worlds) is great fun. ***Downers*** – Well, it's not really a game as such, is it? It's pretty slow too, and making anything really worthwhile gets very complicated. ***The Bottom Line*** – Expensive and of limited appeal, but if you've always itched to create a Freescape game you can't really complain. ★★★

TURRICAN 2
Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – Enjoyable mindless blasting. ***Downers*** – Erm, has there been some mistake here? Someone appears to have sent us a copy of *Turrican*. ***The Bottom Line*** – Better than the original, but that's the only way in which it's different. ★★★

TUSKER
System 3 (Activision) £24.99

Uppers – Nothing actually wrong with it. ***Downers*** – Nothing new. Nothing interesting. Just nothing. ***The Bottom Line*** – Depressingly average. ★★

ULTIMA V
Origin (Mindscape) £29.99

Uppers – The scope and depth of *Ultima V* goes way beyond other role-playing adventures, even previous Ultima releases. ***Downers*** – Not a bit of joystick action in sight; some may find the size of the game daunting. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Ultima V* offers arguably the best in graphic fantasy. ★★★★★

ULTIMATE RIDE
Mindscape £24.99

Uppers – Realistic handling. ***Downers*** – Dreadful gameplay.***The Bottom Line*** – Another failed attempt at the accuracy/fun game balance. ★★

UMS II
Rainbird (MicroProse) £34.99

Uppers – The pinnacle of tech-head wargames. ***Downers*** – Atrocious documentation could mentally scar beginners for life. ***The Bottom Line*** – It won't win the wargaming fraternity any new members, but it'll put some in seventh heaven. ★★★

UNREAL
Ubi Soft £24.99

Uppers – Looks very striking, nice variation in gameplay too. ***Downers*** – The absurd 'save game' feature spoils things a bit. ***The Bottom Line*** – A cut above your average hack-'em-up. ★★★

VAXINE
US Gold £24.99

Uppers – Beautiful-looking, original and imaginative shoot-'em-up. ***Downers*** – Very, very, very (very) hard. ***The Bottom Line*** – Be prepared to tear your hair out, but this is a great challenge for the supernaturally-talented. ★★★★

VECTOR CHAMPIONSHIP RUN
Impulze £24.99

Uppers – Pretty speedy. ***Downers*** – Uncontrollable. ***The Bottom Line*** – What's the point in a game you can't play? (c.f. Rhetorical Questions For Journalists, Vol. 1) ★

VENUS THE FLYTRAP
Gremlin £24.99

Uppers – Pretty colour-graduated backgrounds and excellent animation. The *P-47*-esque bonus round gives variation, and the attention to detail makes it feel like an arcade game. ***Downers*** – Lacking in challenge for the first few levels, and after that you'll be getting a bit bored with it. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun, but palls fairly quickly. Ideal for younger players. ★★

VIZ
Virgin £24.99

Uppers – Very true to the comic. ***Downers*** – Very shallow and limited. The jokes only really work the first time you see them. ***The Bottom Line*** – Fun while it lasts, but after the first couple of hours you've seen all it's got to offer. ★★

VOODOO NIGHTMARE
Palace £24.99

Uppers – Clear, sharp graphics. ***Downers*** – Maddeningly sensitive controls. ***The Bottom Line*** – A nice change – an average game. ★★

WARLOCK THE AVENGER
Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Playable and quite engrossing scrolling arcade adventure romp. ***Downers*** – An 8-bit game in 16-bit's clothing. ***The Bottom Line*** – *Druid* slightly updated for the 90s, and not by any stretch of the imagination worth £25. ★★

WARZONE
Core Design £20.99

Uppers – Graphics have a degree of character to them, and it's pretty tough. ***Downers*** – Adds very little to the hackneyed *Ikari Warriors* format. ***The Bottom Line*** – Competent but deadly dull shoot-'em-up that you've seen a dozen times before. ★★

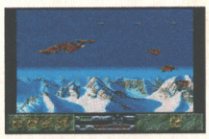
WEB OF TERROR
Impressions £19.99

Uppers – Animation is good. ***Downers*** – Totally frustrating. Duff graphics. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost unplayable; not impressive in any way. ★

WELLTRIS
Infogrames £24.99

Uppers – The kind of game people spend decades playing. ***Downers*** – If you didn't like *Tetris*, don't even think about it. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not as simple as its predecessor, but nearly as addictive. ★★★

WHITE SHARKS
Demonware £24.99



Uppers – Exceptionally good graphics, novel 'choose-your-own-power-ups' weapon system. ***Downers*** – Too fast to have any decent feel, and incredibly unimaginative.***The Bottom Line*** – The game that put the 'bog standard' into 'bog standard shoot-'em-up'. Duff. ★★

WILDLIFE
MD Production £19.99

Uppers – Ideologically sound. ***Downers*** – *Operation Wolf* without shooting is like swimming without water.***The Bottom Line*** – Utterly desperate. ★

WINGS
Cinemaware £29.99

Uppers – Authentic WW1 feel. ***Downers*** – Ludicrous disk swapping. Very little gameplay. ***The Bottom Line*** – Far too simple for a sim, and too expensive for what it is. ★★

WINGS OF DEATH
Thalion £24.99

Uppers – Range of power-ups is good, even including power-downs! ***Downers*** – Not the most innovative game ever. ***The Bottom Line*** – Almost as much fun as *Xenon 2*, though not as pretty. ★★★

WOLFPACK
Mirrorsoft £24.99

Uppers – Very deep (ho ho). ***Downers*** – Sub sims never score highly on the thrillometer, and this one is no exception. ***The Bottom Line*** – Not as overly techie-biased as many in the genre, but still not one to recommend to the hardened action junkies. ★★

WONDERLAND
Virgin £24.95

Uppers – An evocative telling of the classic Lewis Carrol tale utilising a pretty advanced user-interface. ***Downers*** – Unless you've got a very powerful Amiga with a screen that can handle interlace, the whole thing is very unwieldy. It's not got the best parser in the world either. ***The Bottom Line*** – Brave, but after all the hype the product is something of a let-down. Not a patch on *Monkey Island*. ★★★

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SOCCER
Elite £24.99

Uppers – Very good copy of the coin-op (sob). ***Downers*** – Poor playability, you never get two seconds on the ball. ***The Bottom Line*** – Knocked out in the first round. A pitiful performance. ★★

WRATH OF THE DEMON
Readysoft £29.99

Uppers – Cheaper than *Shadow Of The Beast II*. ***Downers*** – Almost exactly the same in every other respect, even down to the intro sequence. ***The Bottom Line*** – If you liked *S.O.T.B.II*, you won't need this. Otherwise a good alternative. ★★

WRECKERS
Audiogenic £24.99

Uppers – Some refreshing game ideas add a new angle to the old 'aliens-overrun-space station' story. ***Downers*** – The whole thing feels far too much like an 8-bit game. ***The Bottom Line*** – All the elements of a good game are there – they just haven't been tied together properly. ★★

XIPHOS
Electronic Zoo £24.99

Uppers – Silky smooth and subtle. ***Downers*** – Takes far too long to get into the action. ***The Bottom Line*** – Only for the dedicated space trader. ★★

YOLANDA
Millennium £24.99

Uppers – Racy soundtrack. ***Downers*** – Poor graphics make the pixel-perfect positioning required very hard to pull off. ***The Bottom Line*** – Just too hard to be any amount of fun to play. ★

ZARATHRUSTA
Hewson £24.99

Uppers – The *Thrust* gameplay is timeless, and it's been updated with 1990s graphics, resulting in something very special indeed. ***Downers*** – At heart though, it's still a game that used to sell for £1.99 going for £25, which isn't a bargain in anyone's language. ***The Bottom Line*** – Good fun, but to be honest, not really very good value. ★★★

ZIRIAX
The Software Business £24.99

Uppers – Pretty *Scramble* variant. ***Downers*** – Seriously overloaded in the difficulty department. ***The Bottom Line*** – Stupidly difficult, too much for almost everyone. More suited to a budget release. ★★

Z-OUT
Rainbow Arts £24.99

Uppers – A huge improvement on *X-Out*. ***Downers*** – The horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up with knobs on thing has already been done to death. ***The Bottom Line*** – A good *R-Type*, but it isn't different enough to make it stand out from the crowd. ★★★

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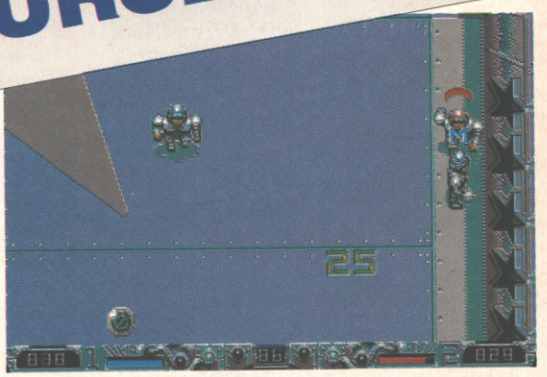

GIVE IT A GO – YOU NEVER KNOW, YOU MIGHT EVEN LIKE IT!

DO THE write THING

You want opinions? You want controversy? You want to hear from the discontented, the maltreated and the plain pigged off? Then go no further, for here we present a barrage of abuse, angst and outrage the like of which you've never read before. Hold on tight, it's the one and only AMIGA POWER letters page...

● **Address your letters to AMIGA POWER, Beaufort Court, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW**

Dear Sir,

If I may, I'd like to make a few comments on some of the letters you published in issues one and two. The subject is, of course, that old complete-games-on-magazine-cover-disks chestnut.

1. The industry argument against cover-mounted games seems to be that weaker full-price products will suffer if there's a lot of high quality stuff available cheaper with magazines. I can see the reasoning behind that, but if in the long term it's average or worse products that suffer, would that be a bad thing? Surely all it would mean is that software companies would have to produce consistently higher quality products to justify their high price tags, and that'd be good for all of us? Or is it alright for sub–standard, 'let's print some money' games like *Hero Turtles* to occupy the charts for weeks while classics suffer?
2. Will the ELSPA members who don't publish cheap re-issues or budget software want that stopped as well, so that having good quality games available around the eight to 10 pound mark doesn't damage the sales of the duff expensive software?
3. Will Public Domain software be removed from cover disks, as this must affect the sales of PD libraries?
4. I take it that not every software company is a member of ELSPA. If this is the case couldn't you put games from non-ELSPA companies on your magazine? (Of course, that might mean losing ad revenue from members, so forget that one, I suppose).
5. Aren't you just as guilty? After all, you computer mag companies put 15p disks on the covers of your magazines and then charge us £2.95 for the privilege of owning a 'free' game! All that's happened is the software publishers have spotted you doing it and said enough's enough!

Yours,
JEFF DUELL, North Shields

To take your points in turn, Jeff:
1. I think what you say here is fair enough, more or less, except you don't point out the real way to stop software publishers putting out poor programs – refusing to buy them! Every decent magazine review made it clear that* Turtles *was complete crap and an awful lot of people still bought it.
2. Yes, it's a bit of a contradiction, isn't it? Why doesn't someone from ELSPA write in and answer that one for us? Better still, why don't we get someone from ELSPA to explain exactly what the policy is on all of this? In fact, how about someone like Roger Bennett, General Secretary of ELSPA? He should know what's going on, shouldn't he? And – hey! – what's that over there on the next page..?
3. This one is, as they say, still up in the air, but with PD by definition owned by no one, it's hard to see how anybody can legislate about it.
4. Most, but not all, major software houses are ELSPA members. What you may not know is that we – Future Publishing – are too, which means we have some (small) part to play in anything that happens. It really is a case of the industry working together on this one, and certainly getting confrontational is to be avoided.
5. Ooh, pardon us! The cheek of charging you a quid for a full price game! We don't get them for free, you know. And even buying disks 100,000 at a time you can't get them for 15p – or do you know something we don't? (This has been AMIGA POWER's Economics For Beginners, Part One, in a series of one. Thank you.)

Who killed Gary Penn?

It's the question that's been rocking the industry. Here are a handful of sample entries to our US Gold/* Cruise For A Corpse *competition we ran last issue – the winner (who of course gets his/her very own Commodore CDTV!) will be announced next issue. The scenario we set up leading to the crime is too long to explain here – you'll have to either go back to the last mag to refresh your memories or simply pick it up as we go along. Anyway, here are some suggestions...

It's very simple. Matt Bielby did go to US Gold. He waited in an office for one of the US Gold reps when he noticed a CDTV just lying around. No one knew he was there so he grabbed the machine and took it straight to Gary Penn, because Gary was desperate for a CDTV.

Gary had no games though, so going around the office he told everyone it was his birthday, and they all went out shopping, looking for a CDTV game for him. Gary became bored in the office on his own, so he decided to borrow one of the cleaner's audio compact discs. What he didn't know was that playing normal compact discs actually killed you!!! It kills people by blasting them to death with sound. Gary sadly died.

So, as Commodore were so secretive about the CDTV I can now exclusively reveal that, wait for it, **C**ommodore **D**id **T**his **V**ile murder!!!

PAUL MARSHMAN, Warrington, Cheshire

So 'playing normal compact discs actually kills you', eh? Sorry, neat (well, neatish) ending, but you rather over-stretch credibility with that middle bit, I'm afraid.

4.15pm. Minutes after Mark Ramshaw leaves for the dentist, the ad sales girls (Alison and Susanne), having realised that Penn was not only having affairs with both of them, but also with a purple spider-plant named Mildred, engage Penn in conversation whilst injecting him just below the knee with nail varnish remover.
4.30pm. As Penn staggers around the office singing a selection of Kajagoogoo hits and threatening to buy an Oric, the 'lads' of the team, believing him to be possessed by some evil spirit, force-feed him copies of games such as *Kwasimodo*, *Ghostbusters II* and *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles*. Penn, naturally, is dead within minutes.
4.45pm. The staff, overcome by guilt at their terrible deed, flee to a small Caribbean Island equipped with only their favourite Amiga games and a signed photo of Lesley Judd.
Therefore, Penn was killed by the entire team (excluding Mark and the two Matts).

MARK WALLACE, East Finchley, London

Sorry, trying too hard to be funny gets you nowhere.

After Mark Ramshaw left for his dental appointment there was a phone call saying a bomb had been planted in the office. It's Gary Penn's responsibility to make sure all the rest get out and to phone the authorities. While the staff are clearing out onto the car park, Matt Bielby is sprinting from the phone box where he made the hoax call. He dives in through the back way unnoticed.

Gary Penn is about to ring the bomb squad when Matt Bielby sneaks up behind him and smothers him with a three foot cuddly toy replica of *Kid Gloves*, which just happens to be sitting on Alison's desk. Now Matt thinks his worries are over. Gary Penn will no longer be blackmailing him for selling AMIGA POWER secrets to US Gold.

NIA CONNELLY, Rhyl, Clwyd.

And so it goes on. Did Matt do it? Or Commodore? Or even the ad girls with help from 'the lads' (which seems to mean just Colin and Stuart) or what? The winner, and perhaps a few more entries, will be revealed next month. Meanwhile, get cracking on this month's extraordinary competition, and you could be flying high.

Dear Amiga Power,

Well I never. I thought the days of the fearless computer magazine had long gone, the days when magazines such as *Zzap! 64* would give a crap game a crap rating.

Then along comes AMIGA POWER, and as I browse among the reviews what do I see? *Toobin'* 39% – Blimey! *Predator 2* 53% – Shocker! *Hydra* 37% – Aaah! I love it! Three very crap games given exactly what they deserve.

The point I am trying to make is that certain magazines seem almost scared to give a bad review. *Zero* is one of the worst offenders – their Amiga reviews rarely go below 75% For example, you gave →

DO THE write THING

Stormball 51% while *Zero* gave it 84%. I know which one I believe, and it's just one of an endless list of comparisons I could make.

This problem was emphasised by a letter in AMIGA POWER Issue Two from Cathy Campos, PR Manager of Image Works. Are some magazines being bullied to give good reviews or what? Anyway, congratulations AMIGA POWER for standing up to software houses, and putting your readers first.

JONATHAN DAY, Gosport

Thanks Jonathan. Mind you, not everyone loves our reviews. Take, for example this next letter...

Dear Amiga Power,

I am a person who hates inconsistency and unclearness, especially in reviews! I have been a reader of *Amiga Format*, your sister magazine, since I bought my Amiga, and have only just bought the second edition of AMIGA POWER. What throws me is the differing views on the game *MegaTraveller I*. I know people can have slightly different views, but you and your sister paper are seriously out of step.

MegaTraveller I in *Amiga Format* received a grudging 70%, with comments on it like 'having completed the game, I can honestly say it wasn't worth the bother.' You say it is 'an absolutely superb game' and give it 88%. And look at your 'Uppers' and 'Downers'! *Amiga Format* are critical of the 'eye-watering' scrolling, the 'pathetic' moving graphics, call the Interloper a 'very naff version of *Asteroids*' and claim that you get very bored with the trying-to-accumulate-money stuff. Then they finish off by questioning whether it will run in 512K.

On the other hand, AMIGA POWER mentions a little trouble with swapping disks for flying around, and makes a small comment on the graphics next to the pictures. You say (or rather, Stuart Campbell says) it is 'completely and totally fantastic'. And nobody, but nobody, clearly states if the game actually needs a megabyte or not.

Please, please, please could you make it policy to always tell us if a game requires a megabyte or not? (A nice big sticker near the title of the review would be really nice!) If I am going to spend 30 pounds on a game I really want to buy a good one, and a magazine like yours would be great for this if only I could believe the reviews.

I am also sending a letter to *Amiga Format* to ask them to get it together, so don't feel slighted. The layout and simple grading of games in your magazine is great – better than *Amiga Format*'s 'four points' bit – but lets have it consistent and clear!

Yours sincerely,

BEN REES, Taunton

First off Ben, we may be 'sister magazines' and everything, but what* Amiga Format *think about a game really isn't any concern of ours. Most of the time we'll broadly agree about a game, but there are occasions – and this was one of them – where we don't see quite eye to eye. And there's no real reason why we should either – if two people on the same magazine don't always agree (and sometimes they don't – that's what our 'On The Other Hand...' boxes are for) it's going to be difficult getting two whole magazine teams to come up with one consistent opinion. And, if you think about it, we're pretty sure you wouldn't really want us to either – your enjoyment of the two magazines would be spoiled if you knew they were both going to be saying the same thing all the time.

And as for* MegaTraveller I, *they're wrong, we're right, and that's that. (And yes, it does need one meg – our copy has a sticker on the front saying as much – and yes again, we should have made that clear in the review).

Dear Sir,

While visiting my local software shops the other day, I noticed that they were all selling many of the newest games at knockdown prices! *White Death* and *Blitzkrieg* were labelled at £9.95 each, *Breach 2* was £7.99, while *The Killing Cloud*, *UMS II* and *Brat* all weighed in at £14.95 each. The *Corporation* mission disk, *Nightbreed* and a sprinkling of budget titles were on sale at under a fiver.

While a single Sheffield shop may normally be found having a sale of some kind, it's rare to see all in a similar state at the same time. I enquired at the counter. The shop assistant claimed that these cheap prices were due to the current recession, a sales slump and the fact that the majority of 'big' releases are rushed out for Christmas.

ELSPA TALKS! COVERMOUNTED GAMES – RIGHT OR WRONG?

There's been a lot of talk lately – both in the industry and, judging from your letters, on the 'streets' – about complete games being given away on cover-mounted disks. The whole controversy blew up around the launch of AMIGA POWER and our early promise to give away a complete game with each issue, so it's a subject that's affected AMIGA POWER readers (and potential readers) more than anyone else.

That being the case, we thought it a good idea to call up Roger Bennett, General Secretary of trade body ELSPA (the European Leisure Software Publishers Association), to explain the situation. Here we go...

(Brrring brrring).
Hello, It's AMIGA POWER here. We'd like to ask you a few questions about cover mounted disks and why the industry's so dead against magazines putting complete games on them.

Well, first off I've got to stress that ELSPA itself doesn't have any mandate allowing us to tell anybody what to do, we can merely act as a forum for discussion and give advice. What happened with the cover mounted disk issue was that a number of software publishers saw that with AMIGA POWER offering complete 16-bit games you had the possibility of a magazine cover-mount war starting similar to that which has developed in the 8-bit market, and they saw the opportunity to put a halt to it before it got going. Our argument is that covermounts have killed the full price Spectrum software market, and it was for the good of us all to prevent that happening with the Amiga.

But couldn't you equally argue that cover-mounted games keep people interested in using their computers, buying magazines about them, reading about more games and makes them much more likely to go out and buy something they really want?

Well, that's certainly not the view of the majority of our members. The industry looks at games as having three 'windows of sales opportunity' as they say. First, there's selling the game at full price, somewhere around the £25 or £40 mark. Then there's the second window of opportunity where a product becomes available as part of a compilation, selling for a similar sort of price. Third comes the budget games release, when it's felt that a product has outlived its useful life on other formats and it then becomes reasonable to make it available for about a tenner. We don't want to damage our chances of selling games at any of these price points.

And what's wrong with cover-mounts being a fourth 'window of opportunity'?

The problem is that there would be pressure to covermount games that haven't yet been on compilation or budget release, thus denying software houses secondary ways of earning money from their products.

But it's the still the software house's choice – surely nobody's forcing anyone to covermount a game they think they've got another use for?

The other problem is one of perception. What's the point of software publishers packaging games in nice boxes with good manuals and trying to make software something that's simply nice to own and worth £25 or whatever when magazines are giving away loose disks? Covermounts are undermining the perceived value of what a game is.

But no more so than compilations or budget releases, which are equally 'undermining' the concept of a game being worth £25. If *Xenon 2* was worth £25 two years ago and it's only worth a tenner now surely it's logical that it'll be worth about, ooh, £2.95 a bit further on down the line and be ripe for covermounting? After all, you can buy stand–alone Amiga games for that sort of price now anyway.

But at least they come in nice packaging so their perceived value is higher. The software publisher isn't just selling a few disks and bits of paper, he's selling what you might call 'a dream' in a very real sense, and that dream is tarnished when a game is put on a magazine.

What, even when a magazine devotes two or three pages to really explaining a game they give away, thus doing a much better job of presenting it than most software packaging? Imagine a situation where magazines put their disks in nice boxes, like the Spectrum mags do with their compilation cassettes. The 'dream' wouldn't be tarnished at all then.

ELSPA members are worried enough that a single stand alone game is being sold with a magazine and thus eating dramatically into the time a purchaser would otherwise spend with bought software. If they saw double disk issues or compilation disks becoming the norm it would be great news for the consumer, but it would really damage software sales and put some companies out of business.

Cutting back on covermounted games will actually be good news for the games player in the long run, because only through software houses being able to continue making decent profits will there be the money about to invest in new games.

So there you have it. Whatever you think about the ELSPA arguments, Roger is undeniably right about one point – no magazine (AMIGA POWER included) can be forced to stop putting software on the covers, they can merely be persuaded to stop in the interests of the software industry. We've made the decision that, things being as they are, no more complete commercial games will appear on our coverdisks for the foreseeable future. Yes, (in the short term at least) that's bad news for you, but it's what makes sense at the moment. (Just don't expect this to be the last word you see written on the subject, that's all).

Is Sheffield merely an isolated case or is it the same nationwide? These stores must be feeling the unemployment sting very badly – already, one local store has had to start filling shelves with various paints, board-games and metal miniatures just to draw in more customers!

Even worse, the software companies themselves must be in a bad way at the moment. If the shops are reducing their prices in desperation, the software houses will probably sell more games, but at the same time make very little profit. Already Hewson have gone under and I wonder who will be next. Add to this the continual threat of piracy and we have big problems, although this may be taking the issue just a little too far...

Any comments you may have on this matter will be gratefully accepted. Do you think I'm blowing it all out of proportion, or am I just being realistic?

Yours sincerely,

STUART HARDY, Sheffield

What tends to happen is this. Many shops – and we're talking the specialist independent computer stores here, not large multiples like WH Smith – will reduce the price of a full price game by around a fiver after four or five months to get rid of the stock. They won't usually do this with big selling, successful games like, oh,* Eye Of The Beholder *or* The Secret Of Monkey Island*, but with games that are doing less well (choose your own). The money off comes out of the dealer's share of the profits, not the software company's, so it doesn't really affect them at all (except, of course, that if a certain company gets a reputation for producing product that doesn't sell, shops will stop ordering their games). With the summer being traditionally a fairly lean time for software sales – though with one as miserable and rainy as this it's hard to see why – discounting gets more common.

In the particular case you're describing though, it seems like an awful lot of discounting's being done – and on games like* Brat *and* UMS II *which you'd expect to be doing quite well. Since you say it's happening in a lot of shops in your area, perhaps a local price war's going on, with each shop trying to undercut the others? (It's happened before, after all).

Yeah!

I thought.Yeah, why not? New mag. New broom (etc). New hair cut. Why don't I write to them? I'll tell them how brilliant they are and I'm guaranteed to get published.

Although I will concede that AMIGA POWER is good, I can't see any reason to publish letters to that effect. Neither can I see any reason to print letters from PR officers and software houses who feel aggrieved at 'unfair' reviews. It's like saying to a school exam marker that your 40% mark was inaccurate 'cos he didn't like your story in composition. The fact is, these people are happy enough when they get a 99.9% mark (and let's face it, every other game does in certain mags). They don't get their PR officers to write in saying 'I'm terribly sorry, but we really do think that review was wrong. In all honesty we think 22.2% would have been a lot more accurate.' I say no software houses should be allowed in the letters pages. Let them give their opinions to each other instead.

And c'mere, there's more.What I really want to know is, are there any snooker simulations on the Amiga? Being new to the world of Amigas I don't know these things.

Lastly (was that a sigh of relief?), why can't AMIGA POWER be different in the way it does its reviews? Why should we take the word of reviewers – or anybody for that matter? Why can't you pick, say, five of your readers to give a review of upcoming games – I'm sure they'd oblige, I would – then get a mark out of 20 from each? Add them up and you've got a mark out of 100. Easy. Where do I sign up?

Regards,

RON HEALY, Dagenham

Well Ron, the reason we published all those 'You're Brilliant' letters (all three of them) was because they represented an overwhelmingly large proportion of our mailbag, and the job of a letters page is to represent the views of its readers, isn't it? Simple as that. As for the software house complaints, shouldn't we provide a right of reply for them, just as we do to any other reader?

If you're after snooker games, why not wait around for Virgin's forthcoming Jimmy White tie-in, programmed by Archer Maclean, due around September and featured elsewhere in this mag? There's no doubt about it, it really is the bee's knees.

And finally, apart from the organisational nightmare your reviews idea would present, why should anyone trust your opinions (or those of any other individual readers) any more than those of an experienced game reviewer? And if you don't want to 'take anybody's word for it', what's the difference between the reviewer being a reader or a professional journalist?

Dear Mr Bielby,

As a 32 year old MD of a beautiful glossy magazine (enclosed) called *Cotswold Life* (end of advertisement), I would like to add my congrats on issues one to three of AMIGA POWER. I was very impressed with the cover disk on issue three, with *Exile* in particular being totally absorbing. The standard of your cover disks far exceeds anything else available (not that I read anything else).

I have to confess to doing little on my Amiga other than gaming, and at my age desperately need some reassurance that this is OK! I just can't get over the superb quality of some (not all!) of the games available today.

How do you see the budget (ie £2.99) end of the market affecting full price games, if at all? I assume you wouldn't find an *Exile*, *Gods* or *Xenon 2* quality game at this low (£2.99) price?

Yours sincerely

STEVEN NICHOLLS, *Cotswold Life* Swindon

And he did as well (enclose an issue of the mag, that is). To make a vague stab at answering your other point, only Prism are currently putting out Amiga software at £2.99, and their current range (see last issue) goes from the terminally average to the dire. Most budget stuff costs less than a tenner and includes a lot of excellent older games. The current £2.99 games are impulse stuff, and are generally perceived of as very different to 'real' £24.99 games – we don't think they'll affect them in the slightest.

No room, no room! I'm sorry, but we're out of space. There's just enough left to suggest that if you've got something to say, jot it down, bung it in an envelope and send it to us at the address printed on the previous page. We'll certainly be interested to read it, and who knows – we might even print the blooming thing! ■

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SECOND OPINION

NEIL YOUNG OF PROBE

'Why should we believe what you lot have to say?' reads the odd letter. 'Who else are you going to believe?' comes back our standard, rather glib, reply. Thinking about it though, we have to admit that second opinions can actually be jolly nice – which is why we're going to start giving them to you. To be exact, we're going to get a 'top industry professional' to sit here and say exactly what he or she likes or dislikes about the most talked about games of the moment...

Neil Young is one of two producers at Probe Software, developers of many of the Amiga's most successful coin-op conversions and film tie-ins. Games like *Back To The Future Part III* and *Super Monacco GP*, *Turbo OutRun* and *Golden Axe* spring to mind, though things to come sound even more interesting – Neil is currently embroiled in projects ranging from the Amiga *Sim Earth* to Mirrorsoft's ultra-secret *Aliens III*...
That's all by-the-by at the moment though – what we're interested in here is what he thinks of *other* people's games...

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE
MicroProse
This is okay I suppose, but for me it falls between two stools – it isn't the incredibly detailed, absorbing sort of simulator that really starts to take over your life, and it's not the you-can-get-straight-into-it-and-have-fun sort of flight sim you've got in *F-29*. Despite the fact that they're all very 'good', I find I never get very excited about MicroProse simulations, and this one's no

***F-15 II* from MicroProse**

different. In fact, one of the games we've played most in the office over the past few months has been *F-29* because it's exactly the sort of arcadey plane game you'd expect Ocean to do – it's fast, it's got lots of good bleeps in it, and it's great in head-to-head mode with two linked computers. It's much more my cup of tea.

THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND
Lucasfilm (US Gold)
Ah yes, now this I'm very impressed with. It's just the kind of game that appeals to us here, a very carefully refined product. It's obviously put together by real professionals who know exactly what they're doing. It's not really what I tend to think of as an adventure game though – it's more of a sort of interactive walking around movie thing.

SHADOW DANCER
US Gold
This wasn't a particularly amazing coin-op, but it's a very well done conversion. The stuff Images are doing, like this and *Ninja Spirit*, is generally very good – in fact, they're getting too good! We're going to have to break their legs, ha ha! Generally arcade conversions are of a very high standard these days – you can't really get away with bad work any more. The problems come when it's the coin-op you're actually being asked to convert that's a bit crap – as a producer it can be frustrating, because you're not usually allowed to change the game to improve it, so you can do the best job in the world and still get lots of crappy reviews.

THE KILLING CLOUD
Image Works
I think Vektor Grafix do some very tasty 3D stuff, and I liked this game a lot. It was very atmospheric certainly, and I liked the whole idea behind it, though I thought some of the still graphics could have been done better. I'm not sure how well the game plays though – I haven't got very far into it.

HERO QUEST
Gremlin
I didn't like this much, mainly because the combat was poo. The game certainly looked really nice, but they've tried to convert the board game too closely – it should have been more like an isometric 3D *Gauntlet* sort of

***Hero Quest* from Gremlin.**

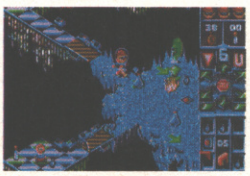
thing. Having said that though, I've been very impressed with the current crop of Gremlin products – they've not really had a duff one since *Supercars*.

GODS
Renegade
I'm not thrilled I'm afraid – this has very nice graphics, and the Bitmaps are good chaps with the right attitude, but they need to be more careful with the stuff they're releasing. I didn't like *Cadaver* at all – I thought it was really poorly done generally, and the sprite didn't seem to relate to the backgrounds properly – so if *Magic Pockets* isn't good their reputation is going to slip a bit. *Gods* certainly isn't the game it should have been.

ARMOUR GEDDON
Psygnosis
Well, I loved the intro sequence, but I don't care for the game that much. I think it's boring – we've seen it all before, and for me it had a very 'so what?' feeling to it. There's no intuitiveness to it either. We hadn't read the manual – I really don't think you should have to, a game should explain itself, at least in some shallow way – so I couldn't get off the factory screen for ages! It's very nicely done, like all their products, but it doesn't seem to have the gameplay. And don't you think it's odd that when they do something that REALLY is playable, like *Lemmings*, they seem to compensate for it being good by throwing all their usual nice presentation out the window? Eh?

GERM CRAZY
Electronic Zoo
What a pile of crap! And wasn't the advert awful too? It looked like they tried to save money on an artist and got someone at the company to draw it themselves! I'm not convinced the whole idea for the game was any good in the first place, and I'm certainly not sure about the execution, but that advert will have scuppered its chances from the off. People will look at the picture and who'll be seriously tempted to give the game a chance?

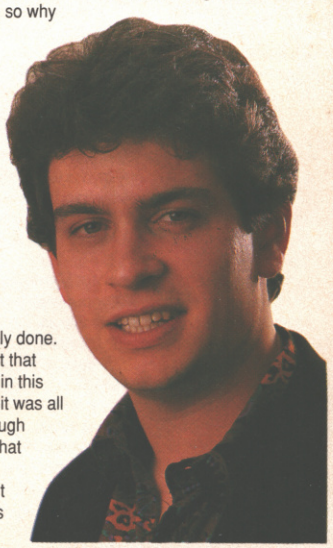
BRAT
Image Works
There was a very nice intro sequence on the front of this, but the game itself didn't really appeal to me. There's an ancient game called *Flip And Flop* – or something like that anyway – from First Star, which was a similar isometric 3D tile thing and seems to have been a big influence for this. Me, I liked the first version better.



***Brat* from Image Works.**

CHUCK ROCK
Core
This was very, very pretty. Core are doing some excellent stuff at the moment – I'm really looking forward to *Thunderhawk* – though they slightly worry me when they come up with products like *War Zone*. It's probably better than *Mercs*, but why do it? It looks like it's just a little money spinner, but I bet the cash they earn from it is nothing compared to what they're making in Japan from console versions of *Corporation*, so why do they bother?

'Gods... isn't the game it should have been'



CYBERCON III
US Gold
Cybercon III is very nicely done. I didn't really like the fact that you were walking about in this big, clumpy metal suit – it was all too robotic for me – though obviously it was meant that way. The bit where you detach the camera and it flies about the place was excellent though, and the 3D was generally superb. It was just incredibly fast too.
If I had to chose a favourite game developer it would have to be The Assembly Line, just because they're so very conceptual. By that I mean that they come up with interesting ideas and they always seem to have a great belief in what they're doing.

RAILROAD TYCOON
MicroProse
This is poo I'm afraid. It's the sort of product that simply doesn't interest me at all. They've deliberately gone out there and said they're going to do a *Sim City* with trains, but the whole concept's simply too limiting – and who really gives a monkeys about trains anyway? It looked a bit sloppily programmed too, but that wasn't the real problem – unlike a game like *Sim Earth*, which I find fun to simply muck about with and see what happens, this simply had no possibilities for experimentation, no appeal, no real point.

WONDERLAND
Virgin
Now this is something I like. The new windows environment is good, and will presumably give Magnetic Scrolls a system which they can now use on a number of other projects, and I found it all very friendly. This was one I could just pick up and use straight away. The graphics are nice too. I'm actually a big fan of good adventures – I really miss the old Infocom products and I'm glad to see them getting a re-release. *The Hitch-hikers Guide To The Galaxy* is one of my favourite ever games.

NEXT ISSUE: The September issue of AMIGA POWER will be on sale on August 22nd, and will feature an excellent cover disk and the first crop of the big autumn reviews. Order yours now!

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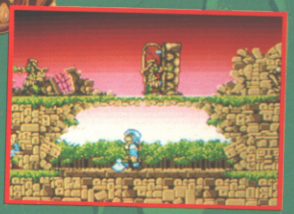

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Cruise For A Corpse: we expect a lot, but can Delphine meet the adventure game challenge set by Lucasfilm? Find out next issue!

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